

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

India: hunger rises as agricultural capital boosts yields and profits

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JULY 27, 2004

Utah coal miners march back to work at Co-Op

Vow to change job conditions on way to winning union election



Militant/Terri Moss

Co-Op coal miners lead march to mine July 6, following unconditional company offer to return after 10-month strike.

BY PAT MILLER
AND RÓGER CALERO

HUNTINGTON, Utah—On the morning of July 6, about 100 coal miners and their supporters gathered at a local baseball field here. They prepared to march up the hill on Bear Canyon Road to the Co-Op mine to deliver 50 individually signed letters from Co-Op strikers notifying the company they are getting back on the job after an uncon-

ditional offer by the bosses to return to work.

“We are letting the mine owners know we are coming back to work stronger than we were last September,” Juan Salazar, one of the strike leaders, told the gathering. “We know our rights. We are not going to let them intimidate us. They can’t interfere with our efforts to join the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), to put union stickers on our hard hats, to join together.

We are going to win this election.”

Bill Estrada, another strike leader, said, “We are determined to win the struggle for a union and a contract. That will only be won by fighting at the same time to better the conditions in the mine. From day one, we will have a safety committee in the mine to defend miners’ rights.”

“When we go back we will defend our-
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Nearly 12,000 sign petitions in first week to put Socialist Workers on N.Y. ballot

BY NORTON SANDLER

NEW YORK—As this issue of the *Militant* goes to press, supporters of the Socialist Workers Party campaign have collected more than 10,000 signatures on petitions to put the SWP slate of Róger Calero for president and Arrin Hawkins for vice-president of the United States, and Martin Koppel for U.S. Senate, on the New York state ballot. With this pace after five days of petitioning, organizers expected to end the first week of the drive with nearly 12,000 signatures—far surpassing all expectations.

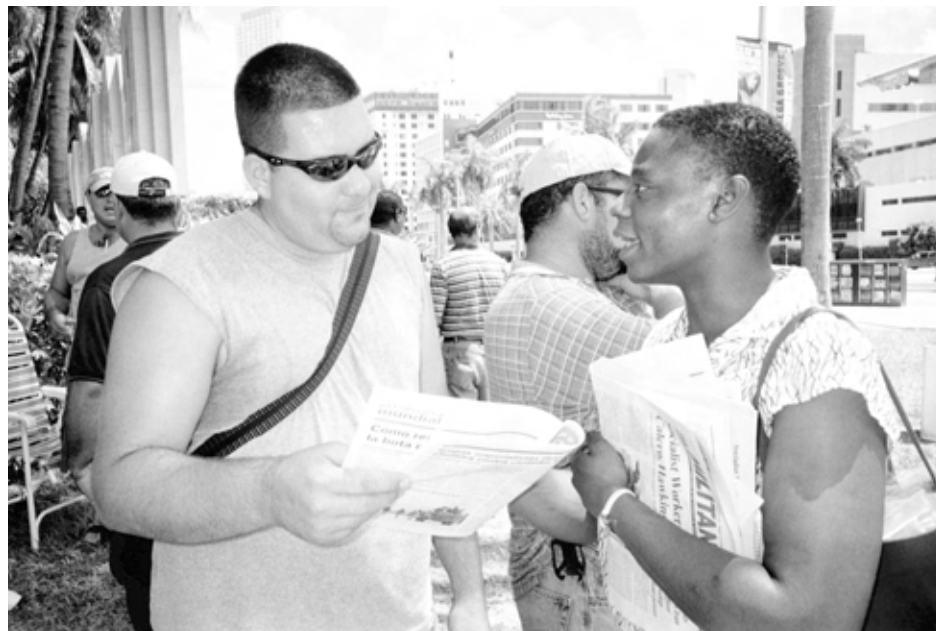
“Our campaign supporters now know that coming to New York and getting a firsthand feel for the tremendous response we are already getting to the most ambitious ballot effort we will mount this year, will affect the tone and spirit of our campaigns across the country for months ahead,” Calero said.

The New York ballot drive began on the

July 10-11 weekend with more than 43 petitioners hitting the streets of New York City the first day, and 47 the second. At the same time, campaigners also fanned out in Buffalo, Albany, Schenectady, Lackawanna, and Binghamton. By the end of the weekend, nearly 8,000 people had signed for the SWP candidates. A full-time team of campaign volunteers has been bringing

in hundreds more signatures every day since then.

Joining the effort to assist the SWP campaign in New York have been Socialist Workers candidates and their supporters from Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Hazleton, Pennsylvania, Miami, Newark, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, San
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Militant/Norton Sandler

SWP vice-presidential candidate Arrin Hawkins, right, campaigns July 2 among independent truckers on strike at the Port of Miami (see article on page 6).

NATO troops to train Iraqi military set up under occupation

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

A NATO military delegation headed to Iraq in early July to lay the groundwork for the imperialist military alliance to begin training the Iraqi armed forces that were set up under the U.S.-led occupation. The training plans are taking place without the involvement of the French government, which said at a recent summit it would refuse to participate in deploying NATO troops in Iraq.

“Our expectation is that NATO will see
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U.S. rulers target Brazil over use of nuclear fuel to expand electrification

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

Washington is bringing increasing pressure to bear on the government of Brazil to curtail its plans to increase production and use of nuclear fuel to expand the country’s electrification. Using the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the U.S. government is demanding that Brasilia accept “surprise” inspections of its nuclear
Continued on Page 2

Miami truckers end strike after back-to-work order by judge

BY NICOLE SARMIENTO

MIAMI—A federal judge ordered independent truckers here on July 9 to end their two-week strike, which had shut down transportation in and out of the Port of Miami since June 28.

Three days later, the truck drivers were back on the job having yet to resolve their grievances.

Port authorities claimed that nine ships loaded with cargo had been diverted from
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LATE BREAKING NEWS

SWP slate
certified on ballot in:

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- * New Jersey
- * Washington state

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Brazil electrification

Continued from front page
facilities, in particular a new uranium enrichment plant in the southern city of Resende, near Rio de Janeiro.

As in other semicolonial countries, millions of workers and peasants in Brazil lack access to electricity needed for lighting, refrigeration, cooking, and other basic needs. Electrification is also necessary for developing modern industry and cultural life. Nearly 40 percent of Brazil’s rural areas are not electrified. A drought three years ago wreaked havoc with the country’s electricity grid, which is largely supplied by hydroelectric power, causing rolling blackouts across the nation.

An editorial in the July 2 *Miami Herald*, titled “A nuclear standoff in the Americas,” called on Brazil’s government to submit to unannounced inspections. “The Brazilians say the enriched uranium is intended only to fire its two nuclear-power stations,” the editorial said. “The reluctance to admit inspectors is based on a claim of superior technology that must be shielded from the prying eyes of rivals in the nuclear-energy industry.... In a globalized world, Brazil’s refusal to allow full inspections is sending the wrong message. It could undermine U.S.-led efforts to persuade countries such as Iran and North Korea to submit to full scrutiny of their own nuclear programs.”

The government of Brazil’s president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has refused IAEA entry into the Resende facility until a procedure can be developed to protect technological innovations. IAEA director-general Mohamed ElBaradei claimed, according to the June 30 issue of the Brazilian daily *O Globo*, that “we have inspected uranium enriching centers in many countries without revealing any industrial secret. Brazil will not be the exception.”

The *Herald* editors said the “best outcome” would be for the Brazilian government to open up its nuclear facilities to surprise inspections.

Brazil is a signer of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, but has not signed the so-called additional protocols, which authorize spot inspections without prior notification.

Decades of government neglect of the countryside has devastated rural toilers and produced a mass exodus to the cities, where industrialization has created more jobs. The portion of the population living in the cities has grown from 55 percent in

1970 to 77 percent in 1990 to 82 percent today. Successive governments have promised to bring electrical power to rural areas, but in practice they concentrated energy development in urban industrial centers, mainly in the southeast of the country.

Today the wealthiest 1 percent of Brazilians own 40 percent of the land. In addition to facing one of the most unequal land distributions in the world, working people in Brazil have felt the consequences of a 0.2 percent contraction in the economy last year, its worst performance in 11 years. Unemployment exceeded 13 percent in April, according to official figures, while household consumption dropped by a record 3 percent, fueled by a 6 percent decline in the buying power of the average wage.

In the north and northeast of the country less than half of rural households have access to electricity. For some areas officially considered electrified, power is only available about six hours per day.

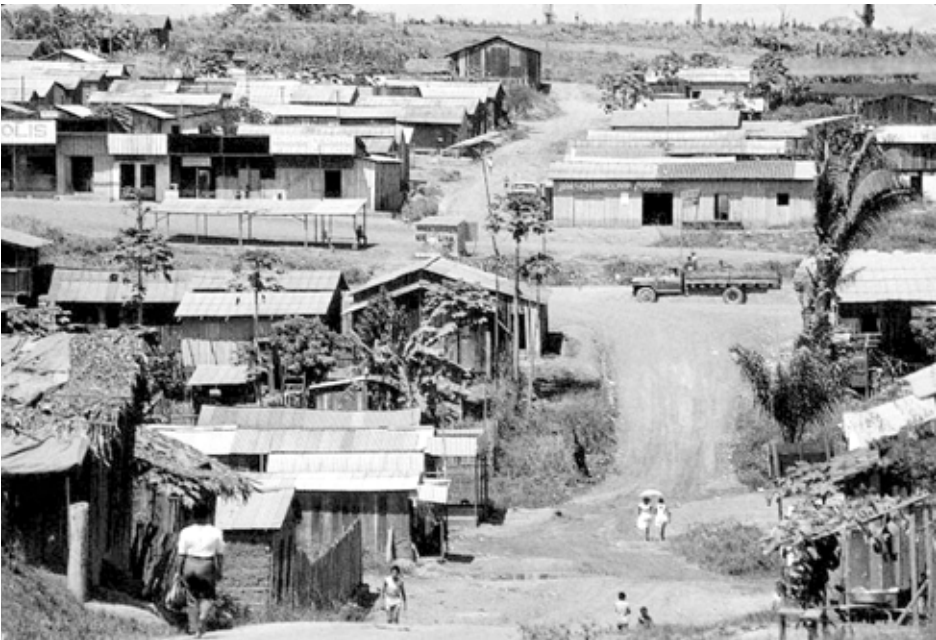
It was on the basis of his promises to improve the living and working conditions of workers and farmers—including solving the electrification problem—that Lula won a landslide victory in the October 2002 presidential elections.

Shortly after coming into office, Lula announced a “Zero Hunger” program. His government allocated \$1.6 billion to provide food stamp-like vouchers for the 50 million people—nearly one-third the population—who live in poverty in Brazil. Da Silva has increased the minimum wage for government workers, though this standard is largely ignored by private companies.

At the same time, the government has continued to make interest payments on the country’s foreign debt and has shown “determination to stick to agreements with the International Monetary Fund,” according to an editorial in the June 1 *Financial Times*.

Under the burden of debt slavery to international finance capital and domestic capitalist exploitation, poverty has remained rampant and joblessness has increased. During a series of mid-March public appearances of Brazil’s president, placards could be seen among the largely welcoming crowds saying, “Lula, give us jobs!” and “We are still hungry,” according to an article in the June 27 *New York Times* magazine.

In November 2003 the government launched an “Electricity for All” program, aimed at providing power to 2 million rural households that lack access to electrical



Mining town of Curionopolis on the Amazon River in Brazil. About 60 percent of rural areas have access to electricity, some for only hours a day.

power. The \$2.5 billion plan under the direction of the Ministry of Mines and Energy projects complete rural electrification by 2008.

The 2001 drought showed the vulnerability of the nation’s energy system. The hydroelectric power plants that had generated 90 percent of Brazil’s electricity supply were left with dry reservoirs, provoking blackouts across the country.

There are two nuclear power plants in Brazil, and the government is considering construction of a third. Brazil has the world’s sixth-largest uranium reserves. The Resende enrichment plant will play an important part in the country’s energy development when it comes on line in October. It will supply centrifuge units for the nuclear plants. Brazilian officials project that by 2010 it will produce 60 percent of the plants’ needs, saving them \$12 to \$14 million per month.

In February the White House presented a program for “Strengthening International Efforts against Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation,” in which it charged the Iranian government, in particular, with using a claim of needing uranium enrichment for energy needs as a cover for

producing nuclear weapons. Washington, which possesses more nuclear weapons than any other country, is now calling on Brasilia to open up the Resende plant to increasingly intrusive IAEA inspections. Three months earlier a State Department spokesperson said, in reference to Brazil, that the U.S. government “urges all states, particularly with sensitive nuclear activities such as uranium enrichment, to adopt the highest nonproliferation standards including the Additional Protocol.”

The Brazilian government has rejected Washington’s demands. On May 14 Brazil’s ambassador to the United States, Roberto Abdenur, said his government would not bow “under pressure, sometimes intense pressure, as if we have evil intentions.” He said Brazil’s nuclear program was for solely peaceful purposes, and pointed to the hypocrisy of Washington to demand that countries such as Brazil renounce the development of nuclear weapons, while it maintains a vast arsenal. “We are worried at the fact that, more recently, the U.S. has come out with a defense strategy which gives more, and not less, value to the use of nuclear weapons, even against non-nuclear weapons states,” Abdenur said.

World youth federation sets date for international festival

BY JOHN PINES

BRASILIA, Brazil—At an international gathering here June 6–8, youth groups from around the world issued the formal call for the 16th World Festival of Youth and Students. The festival will take place August 5–13, 2005, in Caracas, Venezuela.

Fifty-four youth organizations from 30 countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe took part in the first international preparatory meeting—hosted by the Union of Young Socialists, the youth group affiliated to the Communist Party of Brazil—to discuss and decide on the date, location, and themes of the festival.

The majority of the delegates came from Latin America—Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Paraguay, Uruguay, and

Venezuela. From North America, the Young Communist League and Young Socialists sent representatives. After Brazil, the largest delegation came from Venezuela.

Most delegates from Venezuela arrived a day late, having stayed in Caracas June 6 to participate in a mass rally to oppose efforts by Venezuelan capitalists and their backers in Washington to overthrow the elected government headed by President Hugo Chávez. The latest such attempt is centered on a presidential recall referendum that is scheduled for August 15.

“A defeat in Venezuela will be a defeat for Cuba,” said Kenia Serrano, head of international relations of the Union of Young Communists in Cuba, explaining the stakes

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THE MILITANT

U.S. troops out of Iraq now!

Washington and its allies continue the military occupation of Iraq after transferring the government to an Iraqi cabinet. The ‘Militant’ brings you the facts on the drive by the competing imperialist powers to redivide the world, which is at the heart of this war of plunder. Don’t miss an issue!



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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant’s* views. These are expressed in editorials.

How imperialists use UN atomic agency to target power-poor oppressed nations

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

On July 9 the chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mohamed ElBaradei, announced that the United Nations agency is investigating several governments over whether they have purchased materials on the black market that could be used to make nuclear weapons. Among these are Syria and Saudi Arabia, an unnamed “senior diplomat” told the Associated Press.

The previous month, the IAEA governing board condemned the Iranian government for failing to cooperate to its satisfaction with UN “inspectors” and insisted that Tehran abandon plans to build a nuclear power research facility. Washington wants the agency to refer the issue of Iran’s nuclear program to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions. The Iranian government says it seeks to develop nuclear power plants to help meet the country’s growing electrical needs.

Washington is also using the IAEA to pressure the government of Brazil into allowing unannounced inspections of its nuclear power facilities, including a new uranium enrichment plant. Agency officials say they want to make sure no uranium is being enriched beyond that which was declared. The Brazilian government has so far refused to allow such inspections. (See article on page 2.)

These actions by the International Atomic Energy Agency underscore how Washington and its imperialist allies have increasingly used that UN body to target semicolonial nations that seek to develop their electrical capacity through nuclear power.

Original role of IAEA

The IAEA was established by the United Nations half a century ago. But it is only in the past decade that the imperialist powers have systematically used it as one of their tools to police and intervene in Third World countries, often tied to threats of diplomatic and economic sanctions or even military aggression. The turning point came with the 1990-91 U.S.-led Gulf War against Iraq.

The International Atomic Energy Agency was originally set up in the late 1950s as a UN body whose stated purpose was to supervise international collaboration for promoting the peaceful applications of nuclear energy.

The U.S. rulers unleashed the first nuclear weapons in 1945 with the annihilation of the civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. To this day, the U.S. government remains the only one to have used atomic weapons. Washington had a nuclear monopoly in the late 1940s and maintained a big lead into the next decade. The advance of the world revolution in China, Korea, and elsewhere pushed the U.S. rulers back, however, buying time for the Soviet Union to develop its own nuclear weapons. Since then, every advance in nuclear technology was aggressively initiated by Washington but quickly matched by the USSR, and the U.S. rulers had to recognize they would be unable to attack the Soviet Union militarily and win.

Moscow exploded its first atomic bomb in 1949. London and Paris followed suit in 1952 and 1959, respectively. Throughout the 1950s, it was still possible to believe that only major powers with a strong technological infrastructure could develop a nuclear weapons capacity. That imperialist hope was shattered the following decade as China exploded its own bomb in 1964. Subsequently the governments of Israel, India, and Pakistan acquired nuclear arms, and the list will likely grow.

The goal of the ensuing imperialist nuclear weapons buildup in the United States and Europe was to give Washington and its allies the freest hand possible to intervene militarily against the colonial revolution and against the extension of the socialist revolution around the world. At the same time, in face of its inability to maintain a nuclear monopoly, the U.S. government called for international control of both military and peaceful applications of nuclear energy under UN supervision.

In December 1953, U.S. president Dwight Eisenhower gave his “Atoms for Peace” speech before the UN General Assembly. Washington promised to provide nuclear technology, training, and know-how to those countries that would agree to restrict

the application to peaceful purposes.

The International Atomic Energy Agency was established in 1957 under the aegis of the UN. In 1970 the UN Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) came into force. The treaty requires that the “Big Five”—the imperialist powers in Washington, London, and Paris, as well as the workers states in Moscow and Beijing—negotiate to take steps to reduce their nuclear arsenals, not furnish nuclear weapons to governments without them, and aid “non-nuclear” countries in the peaceful development of nuclear energy. In return, the latter countries must agree not to acquire nuclear weapons and to accept IAEA inspections of all relevant facilities.

In a feature article in the June 13 issue of the *New York Times* magazine, author James Traub contrasts the original role of the IAEA and how it has changed since 1991.

Traub states, “It was almost an invisible organization until the aftermath of the Persian Gulf war.” IAEA officials carried out routine administrative inspections of countries from Canada to Iraq and Iran, giving them a clean bill of health. “The IAEA had no intelligence-gathering capacity of its own, and the 35-nation board of governors was reluctant to let the agency use data gathered by national intelligence services,” he writes.

Turning point with Gulf War

That changed after the first U.S.-led assault on Iraq. After the first Bush administration failed to overthrow the Iraqi government, the Clinton White House used a combination of aggressive tactics, including periodic bombing attacks and a UN-sponsored economic blockade, to set the stage for new attacks on Iraq. Washington began to use the IAEA as one more tool in its war drive.

From 1991 to 1998, UN “inspectors” were sent to Iraq as part of a newly created UN Special Commission (UNSCOM), supposedly to verify implementation of UN resolutions imposed on Iraq after the Gulf War demanding that it eliminate all “weapons of mass destruction,” including nuclear facilities. The purpose of the “inspections” by this allegedly neutral agency was to build up a propaganda campaign against Iraq and provide a rationalization for launching further military aggression against Baghdad.

The IAEA also began to be used increasingly as part of the imperialist campaign of military, economic, and diplomatic pressure against north Korea, focusing on that country’s nuclear power program. In 1993 the Clinton administration provided Hans Blix, then director of the IAEA, with U.S. spy photos of north Korean nuclear facilities. From that point on the agency began to make use of the information provided by the CIA and other imperialist spy agencies.

Washington has pushed to give the UN agency more aggressive policing powers. In 1997 it began using an additional protocol of the Nonproliferation Treaty allowing IAEA officials to visit any building they claimed might contain nuclear facilities and to conduct spot inspections with as little as two hours’ warning. The Bush administration has proposed a further step: that benefits from the Nonproliferation Treaty be made conditional on ratification of this protocol. ElBaradei has even proposed making the NPT mandatory, so that withdrawal would be sanctioned. A major target of this move is north Korea, which pulled out of the NPT in 1993 in response to provocative IAEA “inspections.”

As Washington accelerated its war drive against Iraq in 2001, UN inspectors were sent back into that country under the pretext of searching for “weapons of mass destruction.” The accusation that the Iraqi government had a secret nuclear program was one of the reasons given for the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Following the assault on Iraq, the imperialist powers stepped up their offensive, targeting Iran and north Korea in particular. In both cases the spearpoint of this drive is the charge that these governments are developing nuclear bombs. Tehran has insisted that it has long been developing nuclear power, not to build weapons but to meet the need to expand the country’s electrical power and infrastructure. Voicing an argument made by proponents of Washington’s offensive against Iran, *New*



Iranian students protest in October 2003, outside Sad Abad palace in Tehran. They denounced efforts by top officials from Britain, France, and Germany to press the government of Iran to agree to unannounced “inspections” of its nuclear facilities by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The sign in the front refers to British foreign secretary Jack Straw, who was part of the meeting inside Sad Abad at the time.

York Times journalist Traub stated that “the bargain enshrined in the Nonproliferation Treaty” of receiving support for the peaceful use of nuclear energy in exchange for not acquiring nuclear weapons—“is effectively defunct. The distinction between peaceful and warlike uses of nuclear power has become hopelessly blurred. The threshold issue in nuclear nonproliferation is not the hardware... but the capacity to enrich uranium,” which is needed for nuclear power generating plants.

In an escalation of its aggressive campaign, Washington is pressing the IAEA to refer the question of Iran’s nuclear program to the UN Security Council in order to threaten it with sanctions.

ElBaradei has also proposed that the manufacture of enriched uranium for export be put under “multinational control” in order to block countries like Iran from making their own nuclear fuel.

Piracy on high seas

In a further escalation, Washington is seeking to legitimize the boarding of ships

in the name of “nonproliferation.” In January 2003 the Proliferation Security Initiative was launched. This is a set of agreements under which Washington and a select group of its allies work to track and seize materials, including by stopping and boarding ships on the high seas, allegedly destined for weapons programs in “states of proliferation concern.”

In October 2003, under the cover of the PSI, Washington intercepted a ship bound for Libya and claimed it seized centrifuge parts for nuclear facilities. This was the latest in a 20-year imperialist offensive against the Libyan government. In December of that year the government in Tripoli capitulated to these threats, announcing that it would dismantle its nuclear weapons programs and allow IAEA officials to verify compliance. The latest step by Washington in this direction was a boarding agreement with the government of Panama in June of this year. More ships fly Panama’s flag than that of any other country. The government of Liberia signed a similar agreement with the U.S. government in February.

NATO to train Iraqi military

Continued from front page

its way to do that this summer, a mission in Iraq,” said Nicholas Burns, the U.S. ambassador to NATO July 8, according to an Associated Press dispatch.

“There’s no question that our leaders have already made the decision, that there’s going to be a NATO mission in Iraq,” he emphasized.

The military delegation, he said, was expected to report back to NATO headquarters with a range of possible options for carrying out the training. The mission is headed by two U.S. officers, Gen. James Jones, NATO’s supreme commander, and Adm. Gregory Johnson, commander of the joint force command in Naples, Italy.

At the NATO summit held June 28-29 in Istanbul, Turkey, Washington won only vague backing for its proposal that NATO train and equip the Iraqi military. Paris and Berlin opposed deploying NATO troops on the ground in Iraq, insisting that individual governments do the training in their countries. They argued for training Iraqi officers outside Iraq, proposing Italy and Germany. But Washington took the stance that Paris and Berlin had opted out of a NATO agreement, and began organizing accordingly.

“We are not going to fly battalions of Iraqi soldiers out of the country. We are not going to be distracted by French rhetoric,” said an unnamed senior U.S. official quoted in the July 3 issue of the *Financial Times*, published in London.

At the Istanbul summit, U.S. officials made more progress in winning agreement to expand the size and scope of the NATO occupation force in Afghanistan. The 26 government leaders agreed to expand the force under its command from 6,500 to 10,000 troops, and to deploy forces outside

Kabul to the northern region, supposedly to provide security for elections scheduled for September.

In a July 1 interview with two military reporters from the Pentagon Channel and the American Forces Press Service, U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld noted that at the Istanbul summit all 26 NATO members except Paris had agreed to the U.S. proposal to deploy the NATO Response Force (NRF) to Afghanistan.

“We’re going to have to find a way to deal with that,” Rumsfeld asserted in the interview. “There are several options, but ultimately, the NATO countries will, in fact, provide assistance for the elections in Afghanistan.”

According to a senior U.S. official cited by the British news agency Reuters, Rumsfeld suggested that instead of making the decision in the North Atlantic Council, a body composed of all 26 members of NATO, the military alliance might use its Defense Planning Committee, on which Paris has no seat because it is not part of NATO’s integrated military structure, to authorize an NRF deployment. “A cutting-edge multinational force with warships, fighter planes and eventually over 20,000 troops, it [the NRF] will be lethal, agile and ready to be deployed to hotspots within five days,” a Reuters dispatch noted. In the July 1 interview, Rumsfeld said sending the NATO Response Force to Afghanistan would free U.S. forces there to beef up the so-called Provincial Reconstruction Teams, occupation forces deployed in different parts of the country. He said it would also allow U.S. troops to do “heavy lifting” along the Afghan-Pakistan border, that is, launching assaults on pro-Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in the area.

UMWA struggle

Continued from front page

selves against any attack by the company,” Salazar added, to loud applause and whistling. “We will be united and we are not going to let them get away with injustices, like they did before.”

After the kick-off rally, the miners and their backers set off on a 25-car caravan that took them close to the mine entrance, where they met another two van loads of supporters organized by a UMWA retiree from the area.

The march stepped off with the Co-Op miners in the lead carrying the banner of UMWA District 22, which organizes miners in the West. Dozens of supporters from Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico followed. For many of the miners, on strike for the past 10 months, it was their first time on this road since they were fired for union activity on September 22 of last year.

In a breakthrough in the miners’ battle to be represented by the UMWA, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) had ruled at the end of June that the 75 miners had been fired illegally and ordered C.W. Mining Co. to reinstate all of them.

Representatives of the Kingston family, which owns the mine, had vowed never to rehire the strikers.

This victory sets the stage for the next round in the miners’ fight for UMWA representation, with an NLRB-mandated union election coming up in August, to be followed by the fight for a contract, workers said.

Rather than reporting to the company separately, the miners had decided to march together to the mine, and invited strike supporters to come with them.

Chants of “¡Sí se puede!” (Yes, we can), “Union, Now!” “UMWA, UMWA!” and “Union Yes!” reverberated as the miners and their backers marched half a mile up the hill on Bear Canyon Road to the Co-Op mine.

Among those in the march were representatives of UMWA Local 1769 from the nearby Dear Creek Mine; retired miners from UMWA Local 9958, a retirees local in Sunnyside, Utah; a representative of UMWA Local 1332 on the Navajo Nation near the Arizona and New Mexico border; and a coal miner from UMWA Local 1984 at the Deserado mine near Rangely, Colorado.

Also on hand were several carloads of trade unionists and other strike supporters from Salt Lake City, and members of the Catholic Church from Huntington, Price, and Salt Lake City.

Grant Howell, a UMWA retiree from Local 6788, organized two van loads from the Carbon County Senior Citizens Center in Price. Most of these 28 strike supporters were widows of miners.

Members of International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 953 at the BHP mine near Farmington, New Mexico, arrived after the march and joined a barbecue and rally that wound up the day’s events.

Co-Op bosses respond

Charles Reynolds, Co-Op personnel manager, met the miners’ contingent in front of the scale house where coal trucks are weighed before leaving the mine. Bob Butero, UMWA Region 4 director, presented Reynolds with the 50 letters signed by the illegally fired miners stating they accepted the company’s unconditional offer to go back to work.

Upon receiving the letters, Reynolds said the Co-Op bosses plan to abide by the recent NLRB ruling. He also stated that the mine currently has a contract with another “union,” the so-called International Association of United Workers Union (IAUWU). This is a sham outfit controlled by the Co-Op bosses and Kingston family members,

miners say.

Standing next to Reynolds in front of the scale house, Chris Grundvig introduced himself to the media as the president of the IAUWU. After a few questions from the press, he was immediately confronted by a group of miners as he tried to answer questions about this so-called union. More miners gathered as the exchange heated up.

Workers want a real union

“I’ve worked in this mine for 17 years and I’ve never been invited to a union meeting—not once,” said Guillermo Hernández, responding to Grundvig’s claim that the miners did not have to seek representation from the UMWA. “It’s a lie there is a union here.”

“When was the last union meeting?” asked another miner, challenging Grundvig.

“How were you elected president? How many votes did you get?” a third miner asked.

Jesús Salazar reminded Grundvig of the day Salazar broke his finger on the job and the company-run “union” did nothing to defend him when the bosses tried to force him back to work. “How can you be president of the union when you are a boss at the mine?” Salazar said.

Grundvig defended the \$5.50 an hour wage paid to many Co-Op miners by claiming they were “inexperienced” and no other company would hire them. He also claimed experienced workers at the mine make up to \$16 an hour. But when pressed by the miners to say how many earn those wages, Grundvig said he only knew of one worker who made that much. Increasingly on the defensive, Grundvig alleged that the miners confronting him hadn’t worked at the mine long enough to really know what was going on.

Jesús Galaviz, a utility worker, countered that he had worked at the mine for six years and was paid less than \$6 an hour. Others told similar stories. Prior to the September 22 lockout there were less than 15 “yellow hats” in the mine, said a number of miners. They were referring to the yellow-colored hardhat worn by workers who have been in the mine less than a year. Most of the strikers are “black hats,” meaning they have had at least one year of experience in working

underground. Many Co-Op miners have also worked in other mines in the region.

“I’ve never worked a day in this mine, but I know exactly what is going on here against the workers,” said Ed Hinkle, a veteran miner from the Deserado mine, speaking to the mine boss dressed up as a “union representative.”

A reporter asked Grundvig about the allegations made by some of the scabs working in the mine during the strike, who said that the mine superintendent has attended the IAUWU meetings held since last September.

Grundvig said the boss is invited and welcome at the “union” meetings.

As it became obvious that the company’s stunt was backfiring, Reynolds intervened, saying the miners and their supporters were slowing down production and would have to leave.

As the miners marched back down the hill to their cars, Ed Hinkle led a chant, with everyone joining in, “Hey hey, ho ho; phony union has got to go!”

The march did not go unnoticed by some of the min-



Militant photos by Terri Moss

At mine entrance, UMWA Region 4 director Bob Butero (above, center) presents letters, signed by 50 miners who have agreed to return to work, to Co-Op personnel director Charles Reynolds (holding papers) on July 6. Inset, miners rebut assertions by Chris Grundvig (in hardhat), whom the Co-Op bosses paraded in front of the media as an official of the company “union.”



Militant photos by Terri Moss

At barbeque after march, supporters of UMWA union-organizing struggle spoke. Top right, Sandy Jesus, president of UMWA Local 1332 in Window Rock, Arizona. Above right, Chris Barbie and Wars Peterman from International Union of Operating Engineers Local 953 in New Mexico and western Texas. Above left, Utah AFL-CIO president Ed Mayne. Left, Bob Fivecoat from UMWA Local 9953—a retirees local—and Annie Fivecoat. “We just want to say how proud we are that you stood up for your rights,” said Bob Fivecoat.



Utah miners' fight

Continued from Page 4

choose representatives to bargain with us on your behalf; act together with other employees for your benefit and protection.”

The company, the notice says, “will not discharge, give oral or written warnings to, suspend, or otherwise discriminate against you because you engage in concerted activity protected by Section 7 of the Act or other activity on behalf of United Mine Workers of America,” referring to the National Labor Relations Act. “We will not question you about your union or other concerted activity,” it continues. “We will not threaten you with discharge because you participate in union or other concerted activity.... We will not threaten to attend meetings or bring immigration officials to meetings where you are engaged in union or other concerted activity.... We will not watch you or give you the impression that we are watching you while you participate in union or other concerted activity.... We will not in any like or related manner, interfere with, restrain, or coerce you in the exercise of the rights guaranteed you by Section 7 of the Act.”

The settlement also includes a back pay provision, the amount awarded to be negotiated between the company and the UMWA, which may be settled in court. The agreement states that miners who were fired have the right to pursue legal claims for damages against the company because of loss of wages or other benefits.

The NLRB settlement and the July 6 events received prominent press coverage in Utah. Most major state media sent reporters to cover the march to the Co-Op mine.

The July 3 *Salt Lake City Tribune* published a front-page article titled “Miners win back their jobs; Huntington workers aren’t celebrating, say safety, wages remain an issue.” The daily ran another front-page article in its July 7 issue with the headline, “Show of force; Armed with a settlement, miners march back to work.”

The same day, the *Deseret Morning News* published an article on the miners’ July 6 march, titled, “Co-Op miners say battle has just begun.” An editorial in the July 8 edition of the same paper concluded, “Next week, the miners have an opportunity to start fresh and, one hopes, negotiate a contract with the mine owners that ensures them a living wage and safe working conditions. Considering that this victory was a result of the miners’ dogged determination (illustrated by their round-the-clock picket at the mine since the lockout began last fall), and the assistance of local, state and international union activists, religious leaders and volunteers dedicated to the cause of social justice, ongoing attention will be required to ensure that the Co-Op miners achieve the dignity they seek.”

New stage of struggle just beginning

The Co-Op miners put on a barbeque and another rally following the march to prepare their forces for the fight that lies ahead.

UMWA international executive board member Mike Dalpiaz pledged the union’s ongoing support to this fight. He saluted the courage of the miners to fight their way to this point. “The next steps will be to win the union election, and then to win a contract,” he said.

Bob Butero, one of the UMWA organizers who—along with Roy Fernandez, Larry Huestis, and Dallas Wolf—has worked with the strikers unstintingly over the past 10 months, thanked the many unions and

other organizations that have responded with financial contributions, food, and other forms of solidarity for the Co-Op strikers. “We are only at the beginning,” he told those present.

Strike leaders are organizing discussions among the strikers to ensure that as many supporters of the union as possible return to work and join in helping to win the union-organizing battle. The company is hoping that some backers of the union will not come back, and that those who do can be persuaded or intimidated to abandon the struggle for the UMWA. A number of miners took other jobs during the strike, some of which pay substantially more than the Co-Op miners can expect to earn before winning the union and a contract.

An important NLRB hearing, which will be open to the public, is scheduled for July 20–22 in Price, Utah, to determine who will be eligible to vote in the union election.

Company union president Chris Grundvig, talking to reporters, claimed Co-Op already has more than 100 people working in the mine.

The miners said that 75 worked at Co-Op before the strike last year. They pointed out that Grundvig’s claim of 100 means the company is organizing to count every boss and numerous Kingston family members and close relatives as members of the company “union” in order to get them certified by the NLRB to vote in the union election to defeat the UMWA.

Ongoing support for Co-Op miners

At the barbeque, union officials and others pledged ongoing support for the Co-Op miners.

Ed Mayne, president of the Utah AFL-CIO, brought greetings of solidarity from John Sweeney, president of the national union federation. Mayne also said that the Co-Op fight had inspired many in the labor movement. He invited the strikers to be featured speakers at the Rocky Mountain Labor School being held July 10–14 at the College of Eastern Utah in Price, where more than 200 union organizers and other officials from across the West will be meeting.

Sandy Jesus, a Navajo miner and president of UMWA Local 1332 near Gallup, New Mexico, also offered his local’s backing. “From my experience—and our local has



Militant/Terri Moss

From left, UMWA Local 1332 representative Sandy Jesus, and Co-Op miners Bill Estrada, Jesús Salazar, and Berthila León, march up to the mine July 6.

plenty since we were on long strikes in 1974, 1987, 1995, and 2000—you need plenty of support,” he said. “The employers have all the laws on their side; our strength is in our numbers. The Co-Op miners have done an exemplary job—from the UMWA convention, to speaking before locals—in reaching out for solidarity.

“The Co-Op miners are different people today from when I first met them last year,” Jesus continued. “The march up to the mine today showed that. They are confident, and a UMWA local in that mine is really going to represent the workers. I am proud of what they have done.”

Miners at the giant BHP coal complex near Farmington, New Mexico, were also on hand to commit their help for the duration. Wars Peterman, president of the Operating Engineers local at BHP, explained, “Companies look at minorities like Navajos or Latinos and they say, ‘we can discriminate against them, we

can pay them less.’ This has to stop. We are standing up today.”

Chris Barbee, a district representative of the same union, who also works at the BHP mine, added, “Miners must remain vigilant, together, and strong for the rest of our lives. We are dealing with an opponent who is not destroyed, and as long as that is the case we must remain vigilant and ready to fight, ready to support each other.”

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Maytag workers end three-week strike

BY JIM BLAINE
AND MARTHA MCLEOD

NEWTON, Iowa—About 1,500 members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 997 who work at Maytag Corp. here ratified a new four-year contract July 2, ending a three-week strike.

Workers struck June 10 over the bosses’ demands to increase the cost of medical coverage and cut pension benefits. The company won concessions on these points in the new contract.

Maytag is the third-largest U.S. manufacturer of household appliances, including washing machines and clothes dryers.

While 1,525 workers returned to work July 6, another 400 who had been laid off prior to the strike were told they would not be reinstated.

During the strike the company had ordered these workers to cross the picket line, but nearly all of the 400 told Maytag that their union was on strike and so they would not cross the line. Some 300 of these laid off workers also showed up for work July 6, expecting, at worst, to be told that their lay-off status would continue, enabling them to receive health insurance benefits and remain eligible for unemployment compensation.

Instead the company told the workers they were “un-reinstated strikers.” UAW Local 997 president Pat Teed told them at the union hall afterwards that the union will file a grievance on their behalf in order to maintain their layoff status, the *Des Moines Register* reported.

Jeff Clark, one of the 400 who the company calls “un-reinstated strikers,” told the press that the grievance procedure could take up to two years. “They should have negotiated something into that contract,” he said.

Through decades of struggles the union had won low-cost medical plans and company-paid pensions. Wages are \$18 to \$19 per hour. Under provisions of the new contract, workers will pay 10–20 percent

of their health-care costs, along with a deductible. They will receive a single 2.5 percent wage increase and five lump sum payments of \$500–\$600 over the life of the four-year contract.

Workers hired after June 1, 2004, will not be eligible for the existing pension, but will be offered a 401(k) plan instead, that is, a sum invested in the stock market and thus vulnerable to any burst of the financial bubble on Wall Street. Currently retirees have a full medical insurance plan. After 2008, retirees’ medical coverage beyond age 65 will be eliminated.

Increased medical costs include \$15 to \$50 per pay period for insurance coverage, a required \$200 deductible for individuals and \$400 for families, plus out-of-pocket medical expenses of up to \$2,000 for individuals

and \$4,000 for families

Although vote totals have not been released, Teed told the press that the majority voted to accept the contract.

Randy Sapp, who has 10 years at Maytag, expressed relief that an agreement had been reached, but said he isn’t content with the new contract.

“It is not what we wanted,” he told the *Newton Daily News*. “It’s just one battle in an ongoing war...and the war goes on. We don’t like giving up what we gave up, but you can’t go out and start somewhere else at where we’re at now.” Kyle VanZante disagreed with the one-time wage increase over the contract, because union members had won annual wage increases for the past three years. “There’s nothing there for new hires,” he said.

Storm Lake, Iowa, meat packers file for union recognition

BY LINDA ROBINSON

OMAHA, Nebraska—Workers at the large Tyson slaughterhouse in Storm Lake, Iowa, have filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) demanding an election for union recognition. José Bustos, an organizer for the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), said, “In coordination with UFCW Local 440 of Denison, Iowa, we turned in the official petition to the NLRB on June 22. The company refused to recognize a card check. So now an election date will be determined. We expect the election to be held within 45 days.”

Since February, meat packers from the Storm Lake plant and UFCW organizers have been meeting regularly to organize the collection of union cards from as many of the 1,500 workers as possible. The majority of the meat packers in this town of 10,000

in northwest Iowa are originally from Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Africa. They slaughter hogs in two shifts at the plant.

One worker, who asked that his name not be used, described how a group of meat cutters on the kill floor decided to draw ribbons on their sleeves to show the company they are for the union and are tired of abuse. “When the boss tried to take one to the office, the other 10 stepped back from their jobs, stopping the line,” he said. “The boss let the guy go back to work.”

“The union has to get in. That’s what we’re fighting for,” said a night shift kill floor worker from Mexico, who also asked that his name not be used. “So many people are getting hurt, the speed of the line is too fast, and we are tired of the company not respecting us and our rights. We want the company to know that we have rights, and they will respect them.”

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N.Y. petitioning

Continued from front page

Francisco, and Washington, D.C. These and other candidates from around the country will be coming into New York on the July 17-18 weekend to help out with the campaigning underway here.

Aside from petitioning, there's more work associated with the campaign effort. Many supporters of the campaign from New York and beyond are lending a hand by cooking meals for the volunteers, printing flyers, fund-raising, and doing the paper work necessary to prepare the petitions to be filed with the state.

Campaign organizers are projecting having up to 20,000 signatures collected by the end of the day July 18, out of their goal of 24,000. The legal requirement is 15,000 signatures.

"Because this New York ballot drive is running way ahead of schedule, the possibility is now wide open to organize volunteers to get the party's slate on the ballot in Minnesota, Delaware, and other states, as well as Washington, D.C., which we were not sure we would be able to do not too long ago," Calero said.

The party will also be organizing to file the required number of electors to get on the ballot in Florida, Louisiana, and Tennessee.

SWP campaign supporters have completed petitioning and have already filed for ballot status, or will rapidly do so, in Iowa, Mississippi, Utah, and Vermont. State authorities have already certified the party's presidential slate with ballot status in Colorado, New Jersey, and Washington State.

Petitioners are circulating literature explaining that the SWP is campaigning to back workers' rights to organize unions and to defend the labor movement, which is under attack by the bosses and the Democrats and Republicans, the twin parties of capitalism.

The SWP also backs "the efforts of nations oppressed by imperialism to expand electrification," the petitioning flyer says, and will "expose the drive by Washington and its allies to prevent semicolonial nations from developing the energy sources they need, including nuclear power, to bring much of humanity out of darkness."

The party's candidates and their supporters are also calling for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. and other imperialist troops from Iraq, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Korea, Haiti, Colombia, and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. And they are demanding jobs for all by cutting the workweek to 30 hours' work at 40 hours' pay at union scale, to spread the available work around.

'Response has been great'

"The response to the petitioning has been great," said Willie Cotton, the SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in the 15th Congressional District, after returning from petitioning in Harlem July 11. "It reminds me of the huge response we got during the *Militant* sales drive this spring, when we doubled the number of subscribers in eight weeks."

Also on the New York slate are Millie Sánchez in the 8th C.D. and Dorothy Kolis in the 16th C.D.

In Buffalo, in western New York near Niagara Falls, petitioners spread out July 10 and worked the crowd making its way through the Taste of Buffalo food festival. "We were competing with petitioners from the Democratic Party," an SWP campaign backer reported. "One woman signed my petition right away after reading our demand to support workers' right to organize. She said she had been fired from a factory that did not have a union."

Beachgoers in Brooklyn were greeted by a team of campaigners as they exited the D subway line and headed for the surf and sand at Coney Island. "I approached one young woman, but she told me she wasn't old enough to vote," recalled campaigner Sonja Swanson. "She then called over her mother, sister, and several friends and made sure they all signed the petition."

"A woman came up and asked about the campaign. She was excited after seeing the pictures of the candidates and what they stood for," reported Janine Dukes, part of a campaign team at Getty Square in Yonkers. "She also helped collect signatures

for about an hour, calling out to the people on the street to sign up to help get these candidates on the ballot."

A number of campaign supporters in New York also noted that their efforts to put on the ballot a working-class alternative to the parties of imperialist war, economic depression, and racist oppression—the Democrats and Republicans—contrast favorably with the attempts by various radicals to gain ballot status for Ralph Nader and Green Party candidates who are acting as the left wing of the Democratic Party under the banner of "independent" candidacies.

Nader, McReynolds, and the Greens

On a few occasions, the SWP petitioners have run into individuals collecting signatures for Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo for president and vice-president (see article on page 7). Their campaign material urges people to sign for candidates "who want to vote for peace, civil liberties and a better life for Americans and the world's people."

"I saw a Green Party member petitioning for Nader in the subway," said SWP campaigner Argiris Malapanis. "He was talking with two middle-age women who were chewing his ear off for 'stealing votes from Kerry.' The Green Party guy was defensive, arguing that 'Nader is only trying to make the Democrats better, more progressive.'"

Other Green Party members are circulating petitions for that party's presidential candidate, David Cobb, and a separate petition for David McReynolds, the Green Party candidate for U.S. Senate in New York. McReynolds, 74, was a long-time leader of the War Resisters League and ran as the Socialist Party candidate for president in 2000.

In a statement announcing his senatorial candidacy, McReynolds states, "In the



Militant/Dan Fein

Ryan Scott campaigning for SWP slate July 11 in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

national race there are many who will support John Kerry because of the great fear of a second term for George Walker Bush. I understand that fear and share it. But New York is a safe state for Kerry—so it will be possible to vote 'as far left as possible' with a clean conscience. More important," McReynolds continues, "it is possible, in the Senate race, to cast a vote against Charles Schumer, who exemplifies what might be called a 'liberal trapped by militarism.'"

Schumer is the Democratic incumbent. The other Senate seat, held by Hillary Clinton, is not up for election until 2006.

An article in the July 12 *Metro*, a free daily in New York City, pointed to the minimal differences between McReynolds and the Democrats. "'What is really disturbing is that Hillary Rodham Clinton and Chuck Schumer still haven't said, in hindsight, that they would have voted against the [Iraq] war,' said McReynolds, citing recent reports that intelligence failures exaggerated

the threat posed by Iraq in the months leading up to the conflict," the article said.

Calero and Hawkins, and the other SWP candidates in New York, will be speaking at a meeting at the campaign headquarters on Saturday night, July 17, following the day's petitioning (see calendar on page 11 for more details). "At that rally we plan to announce that we have broken the back of the New York petitioning drive and are setting our sights on getting the party on the ballot in Washington, D.C., and beyond," Calero said.

For more information, or to help with the Socialist Workers campaign, contact the New York SWP Campaign, Tel: (212) 736-2540, e-mail: nyswp2004camp@yahoo.com, or stop by the campaign center at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor north, in Manhattan's Garment District.

Norton Sandler is the Socialist Workers National Campaign Director.

SWP vice-presidential candidate visits Florida

BY NORTON SANDLER

MIAMI—"The fight to develop and extend electrical power to the areas of the world that don't have it is at the center of the struggle to build an alliance of workers and farmers that can change the world," said Arrin Hawkins, addressing a July 2 meeting here of the Haitian rights organization Veye Yo. The Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president of the United States spoke at this meeting as part of a five-day tour of the Miami area.

Many of the 50 Veye Yo activists attending this meeting in the Little Haiti section of the city nodded their heads in agreement when Hawkins said that domination by Washington and its imperialist allies keeps a substantial portion of the world's population living in darkness after the sun goes down each day, thus limiting industrial development and the possibility for the toilers to raise their cultural level. Hawkins said SWP candidates across the country are supporting the right of governments in semicolonial countries to use whatever means they choose to address this problem, including the use of nuclear power.

In informal discussions after her presentation, Hawkins pointed to the conditions in Haiti following the disastrous floods there in May. The U.S. government and its imperialist allies, she said, were responsible for the deforestation of the country that resulted in devastating mudslides and a huge death toll on the heels of torrential rains.

Hawkins gave her presentation shortly after a campaign talk by Maurice Ferré, the mayor of the city of Miami in the 1970s and '80s, who is currently a candidate for mayor of Miami-Dade County. Ferré, a Democrat, claimed he was competent for election to this post because he was qualified to administer the budget of the county and its school district, which, he said, was larger than the combined budgets of several Caribbean countries put together. He also said that it was the failure of Blacks to vote that cost him the election last time around—as though African-Americans could be counted on to vote for him, if only they would go to the polls.

During her tour, Hawkins joined Nicole

Sarmiento, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in Florida, and a team of campaign supporters at the Point Blank Body Armor plant in Oakland Park, north of Miami. About 40 workers came to the campaign table outside the factory gate to meet the socialist candidates. "We salute you in having won an organizing victory and contract," Hawkins said. "You are setting an example for other workers in how to fight the employers. Our campaign supports the right of workers to organize unions and defend themselves from the bosses' assaults. Everywhere we go, we call for defending the labor movement from the continuing offensive by the employers and their twin parties of capitalism—the Democrats and Republicans."

The Oakland Park sewing plant manufactures body armor for the military and police. Workers there waged a successful two-year fight to have their union, UNITE, which organizes garment and textile workers, recognized. They are now working under their first union contract.

Campaigning among striking truckers

Sarmiento and Hawkins also took the socialist campaign to a crowd of 100 truck drivers gathered outside the entrance to the Port of Miami. The truck drivers began their strike June 28, shutting down transportation in and out of the shipping terminals there. Many of the drivers were born in Nicaragua, while others are of Cuban descent. They are striking over skyrocketing fuel prices, the low wage they are paid per load, insurance payment surcharges imposed on them by the port administration, and the fact that they have to sit idle for hours for a load without being paid for waiting time.

A handful of Cuban truck drivers objected to the socialist candidates distributing literature. "We know about communism, and it's no good," one of them shouted at Sarmiento. Several truck drivers took issue with this stance, however, and made a point of telling others that the SWP candidates and campaign supporters were there to support the truck drivers and to learn about their fight.

On July 9, a judge in Miami issued an order instructing the drivers to end their

walkout, claiming that because they weren't officially members of any union they had no right to shut down the port.

Later that day, Hawkins joined several campaign supporters at the Miami Government Center during the late afternoon rush hour. This is a major downtown bus and rail transportation center. SWP candidates Omari Musa, running for the U.S. House of Representatives in the 17th Congressional District, and Lawrence Mikesch, the party's candidate for mayor of Miami-Dade County, took turns on a bullhorn addressing passersby and distributing campaign literature.

During her stay, Hawkins also visited the farm of C.R. Martin in West Palm County. Martin, who grows corn and string beans, was a plaintiff in the lawsuit filed in the late 1990s by farmers who are Black against the U.S. Department of Agriculture for decades of discriminatory practice that resulted in forcing thousands of African-American farmers off the land.

Martin explained the vise small farmers are caught in today between the low prices they receive on the market for their products, on the one hand, and the high prices of seeds, fertilizer, and other farm inputs they have to pay for, on the other.

During her Florida stay, campaign supporters organized two dinners for Hawkins that young people attracted to the campaign could attend and talk informally with the SWP vice-presidential candidate. Hawkins also participated in a class SWP candidates in Miami are organizing on the book *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes.

All the Miami-area SWP candidates plus Karl Butts, the SWP candidate for Congress in the 11th C.D. in Tampa, joined Hawkins in speaking at a July 3 rally at the campaign headquarters in Miami attended by 36 people. Participants included two workers who had heard Hawkins speak at the Veye Yo meeting, workers from Point Blank who had met Hawkins at the factory gate, and young people from Miami and Tampa who have participated in recent campaign activities. More than \$800 was raised for the national SWP campaign appeal at the rally.

India: hunger rises as agricultural capital boosts yields, profits

BY PAUL PEDERSON

The number of hungry people living in India's rural regions is increasing, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. At the same time, the agency reports, agricultural capital has boosted farm yields and profits and India has become a major agricultural exporter.

The capitalist media have touted India as a development success story for the recent surge in investment by information technology companies and its increasing agricultural productivity.

India's economic development, however, remains marked above all by imperialist superexploitation. This is at the root of the growing gap in living standards between the bourgeoisie and relatively small middle class, on one hand, and the vast majority of the country's 1 billion people, on the other.

Some 214 million of India's inhabitants were undernourished in 2001, an increase of 19 million over the preceding four years, according to the UN's annual State of Food Insecurity in the World report issued last November. The same year, India for the first time became a major grain-exporting country, stockpiling some 60 million tons of rice and wheat and selling 10 million tons of it abroad. In spite of this grain surplus, in 2002 a survey conducted by the government found that nearly half of India's children under five years of age were malnourished, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

The trend is not confined to India alone. Overall, the UN report noted, the number of undernourished people in semicolonial countries increased by 18 million to 798 million between 1997 and 2001. During the same period, countries such as Brazil, China, and India have become major agricultural producers. The UN World Food Program estimates that farmers today produce enough food on a world scale to provide everyone on the planet with a 2,800 calorie diet, the equivalent of the U.S. government's recommended caloric intake for teen boys and active men.

Limits of the Green Revolution

In the past decade, India has become one of the world's leading agricultural producers, harvesting 70 million tons of wheat a year—more than the United States. It has also become a major producer of fruits, vegetables, and milk. This is confined to capitalist agriculture geared to a large degree toward exports, not subsistence farming.

This development has its roots in a campaign launched in the late 1960s called the "Green Revolution." Modern agricultural techniques were introduced, including irrigation methods, new forms of seed, and the expansion of farming areas in the Indian countryside. These changes resulted in a substantial increase in agricultural yields. The average produced per unit of farmland increased by 30 percent between 1947 and 1979 and a substantial percentage of grain production went over to high yield varieties of seed. India was used as an example for agricultural development projects in other semicolonial countries.

In spite of these advances, the majority of small farmers in India continue to use medieval technology to work the land. Oxen remain a standard for millions of exploited rural producers.

While this increase in agricultural production did have an impact on access to food for many, the *Wall Street Journal* noted in a

June 25 article that "in a sign that there are limits to the Green Revolution, the absolute number of hungry people in India began to rise again in the late 1990s."

While the big-business daily blamed the paradox on "inadequate infrastructure, local corruption and rural poverty," it neglected to mention decades of unrelenting imperialist domination as a source of the problem. Today New Delhi owes a whopping \$112 billion to the largest banks in New York, London, Paris, and Tokyo. That figure has continued to climb over the last decade.

New Delhi keeps its markets open to penetration by finance capital from the imperialist centers in part as a condition to gain more credit and to help relieve the debt. This is at the root of the so-called technology boom in India that has brought 1 million jobs for software engineers, customer service agents, and claims processors to the country. Drawn by the enticement of cheap labor, tariff reductions, and other concessions forced from New Delhi by the imperialist lending institutions, major capitalist monopolies have increasingly used India as an export platform to boost their profits.

But every one of these investments has further warped India's economy to serve the needs of the imperialist powers that have dominated its economy for decades and line the pockets of India's superwealthy rulers, as opposed to resulting in stable, national industrial and agricultural development. As a result the explosive contradiction between the potential and reality of life for the majority in India has sharpened.

Today 60 percent of India's population lives in some 650,000 villages scattered throughout the country's rural regions. Only 10 percent of those villages are connected to a paved road, reports the *Financial Times*, and fewer than half have access to clean water and electricity. Building roads that can support trucks is a precondition for supplying food in sufficient quantities to the rural population,



Reuters/Raj Patidar

Farmers plough their field with oxen July 8 outside the city of Bhopal, India. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, 214 million people in rural areas are undernourished, while there are record yields for farm exports.

and providing a means for small farmers to market their crop.

This disparity is what lay behind the electoral upset in May that swept the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from office in the last elections. While the BJP campaign highlighted economic advances that served to benefit a relatively small proportion of India's population, the victorious Congress Party demagogically appealed to the rural poor, promising aid and development for the countryside.

"In the two states where the former BJP-led government fared especially badly—Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu—the gap between India's high-tech centers and surrounding farming areas had become the most pronounced," reported the *Journal*. "Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh, grew prosperous as the state's government courted U.S. companies such as Microsoft Corp. and General Electric Co. and the World Bank praised the state for its economic progress.

"But about 100 miles outside the city's glittering office towers, farmers in the town of Kalimela say they've benefited little," the article continued.

"The government hasn't helped us. No roads. No water," the *Journal* quoted Jarappa Sonia, 35, a sugar cane and wheat farmer from the town, as saying. The Congress Party's promise of free power for the farmers in the state was one of the keys to

its victory there, a region where electricity rates had become a millstone around the neck of small producers.

Congress Party in power

The Congress Party's election reflected the worsening conditions facing the rural majority in India. But the party has made it clear that, now that it's in power, it plans to continue largely along the same course as its predecessor.

In a July 9 article in *Business Week* titled "Reason to Hope for Greater India," the capitalist weekly's Bombay bureau chief, Manjeet Kriplani, stated that the new finance minister has shown his "good intentions about continuing economic liberalization." Kriplani reported that the finance minister has "increased allowable foreign investment in telecom from 49% market share to 74%, insurance from 26% to 49%, civil aviation from 40% to 49%, and he eliminated tariffs on computers."

Kriplani also noted that the government's new education programs would be financed by a 2 percent increase in taxes and that its finance minister has "promised to develop the agri-processing industry with less onerous regulations and elimination of tariffs on equipment imports such as tractors.

"The food and food-processing business in India," Kriplani added, "has attracted much attention from foreign corporations."

Nader campaign wanes, Kerry lacks appeal

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Ralph Nader's presidential campaign is waning as the electoral race between the two main capitalist parties heats up. Many supporters of Nader, whose "independent" candidacy aims to pressure the Democratic Party in a more liberal direction, are ditching his campaign and throwing themselves into an increasingly feverish effort to win votes for Democrat John Kerry.

Meanwhile, Kerry, who recently selected North Carolina senator John Edwards as his running mate, continues to have a hard time gaining an edge over the Republican incumbent. He is running a campaign that is difficult to distinguish politically from that of George W. Bush.

At its convention in late June, the Green Party rebuffed Nader's bid for endorsement. Instead the party nominated California lawyer David Cobb as its presidential standard-bearer. Nader mistakenly calculated that his selection of Peter Camejo, a "socially responsible" financier and Green Party leader in California, as his running mate, would clinch the organization's support.

The Greens, who act as a left wing of the Democratic Party, decided to follow a "safe states" strategy of campaigning for their slate only in states where either Bush or Kerry is considered likely to win by a substantial margin. In contested states, Cobb urges people to "vote their conscience," that is, to vote for Kerry. A group called Greens for Kerry is openly canvassing for the Democrats in disputed states.

Nader himself says that in states where there is a tight race his supporters should campaign for him but that in the voting booth "they can make up their own mind." Campaigning for him is a pressure tactic on the Democrats to "give them a little scare before you vote for them on November

2nd," Nader said in a June 23 interview by Robert Siegel on National Public Radio.

Nader has been endorsed by the rightist Reform Party, giving him ballot status in seven states. He has also courted ultrarightist politician Patrick Buchanan, who gave him a sympathetic interview in the June 21 issue of *The American Conservative*.

Denied the Greens' ballot spots in 22 states, Nader's campaign is also facing increased pressure from Democratic Party forces. Former Democratic presidential contender Howard Dean, the Congressional Black Caucus, the *Nation* magazine, and filmmaker Michael Moore have all called on him to pull out of the race, claiming his candidacy might jeopardize Kerry's bid. In several states the Democrats are seeking to deny Nader a ballot spot. In Arizona they challenged the validity of 22,000 signatures his supporters had submitted—far more than the 14,694 required—and the Nader campaign withdrew the petitions.

Kerry-Edwards campaign

As the Democrats head toward their national convention, which will be held July 26–29 in Boston under the slogan "Stronger at Home, Respected in the World," the Kerry campaign is having a hard time distinguishing itself from Bush's mainstream Republican policies. Kerry and his running mate Edwards, both "New Democrats" like former president William Clinton, register the converging course of the twin capitalist parties and their gradual but steady shift to the right. Their stance was summarized in a July 9 statement by the Democratic Leadership Council that said, "Kerry has outlined an aggressive strategy to win the war on terror by strengthening America's military and building strong alliances with

the friends we need around the world. His economic plan is built on concrete ideas to curb federal spending, promote growth, and expand opportunity."

Kerry, who supports the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq and differs with the White House only on how to make it more effective for U.S. ruling-class interests, failed to gain much ground when the Bush administration was hit by revelations about the torture and degradation of Iraqi prisoners by the U.S. military. In fact, most in the U.S. ruling class back the Bush- and Rumsfeld-led "war on terrorism" and the administration's strategy of transforming the U.S. military into a more agile force capable of deploying rapidly to any part of the world.

Given the Kerry campaign's lack of appeal, many liberal Democrats are campaigning against Bush more than for Kerry, and their "Dump Bush" efforts are getting more high-pitched. An example of this is the Michael Moore "documentary" film *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Asked by *USA Today* whether his anti-Bush movie is aimed at galvanizing the "choir" of faithful Democrats, Moore said, "The choir needs a wake-up call. A large part of the choir isn't energized by John Kerry and is not voting."

To try to energize the pro-Kerry troops, Moore's film pushes conspiracy theories about Bush "stealing" the 2000 elections and about a nefarious Bush–Osama bin Laden connection. He promotes the Democrats' argument that Bush is incompetent to deal with "terrorism" and resorts to low-level personalized attacks including the fallacy that Bush is "stupid." This tone, common to other liberals and radicals, has been part of the coarsening of discourse in bourgeois politics.

Too Many Babies?

The Myth of the Population Explosion
by Joseph Hansen

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A woman's right to choose is in interests of workers

The following is an excerpt from *Abortion is a Woman's Right!*, one of Pathfinder's books of the month for July. The article excerpted below, "Why Marxists champion abortion rights," first appeared in the Dec. 20, 1982, issue of *Perspectiva Mundial*—the *Militant's* sister publication in Spanish. It was written in response to a letter from reader P. Redward, who disagreed with the magazine's support for a woman's right to choose. It is copyright © 1985 by Pathfinder Press, and is reprinted by permission.



BY JOSE G. PEREZ

P. Redward's letter says that "there are no individual rights that are above social needs" and therefore *Perspectiva Mundial's* position in defense of legal, safe abortion,

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

available to all women, is wrong.

The fact is that the right to abortion—which is simply the right of women to control their own bodies—is a very pressing social need. That's why tens of thousands of women around the world have struggled to win this right, and why the Marxist movement has traditionally backed their demand.

Redward argues the question of "individual rights" and "social needs" abstractly, obscuring the class questions at stake in the right to abortion.

The issue is not women asserting their "individual" rights against other "individu-



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Section of April 25 march on Washington that drew nearly 1 million people from across the United States backing a woman's right to choose abortion.

als," such as men, or government officials, doctors, or clergy.

Marxists approach all questions from the standpoint of the interests of the working class. On the question of abortion, we have to begin by recognizing that women are not a group of "individuals," but an oppressed sex. The majority of women in the United States are also exploited as workers.

At the heart of women's oppression is the denial of their right to control their reproductive capacities. That's what the abortion struggle is about—the democratic right of half the population to decide for themselves if and when they will bear children.

Redward ignores the deep-rooted discrimination women face in every facet of their lives. But only by examining the ways women are oppressed can we understand why this issue is so important, not only for women, but for the working class as a whole.

The majority of women in the United States work outside the home. When they get off the job, they must put in long hours of unpaid overtime taking care of household chores.

On the job, women earn less than two-thirds of what men earn. The yearly me-

dian wage of women who work full time is \$6,760 less than what men earn. Multiplying this by the forty-five million women in the labor force, we get \$300 billion that the capitalists make—simply by not paying women as much as men.

For Black women and Latinas, who are triply oppressed as workers, women, and members of oppressed nationalities, the wage disparity is even greater.

Whereas white males have a median weekly salary of \$380, Latinas earn only \$209.

These differentials go against the interests of the entire working class, because it puts a heavy downward pressure on everyone's wages. Only the bosses profit from this.

In addition, discrimination on the basis of sex—as on the basis of race, nationality, or language—is used to pit working people against each other, placing big obstacles on the road to a united struggle against the exploiters.

Bourgeois ideology justifies discrimination against women on the basis that their "natural" place is the home, performing tasks from rearing children, food preparation and cleaning clothes, to nursing the

sick and elderly. This is part of foisting responsibility for all these tasks on individual families rather than making them the collective responsibility of society as a whole. In this way the capitalist rulers and their government free themselves from providing such services as child care, adequate health care, decent education, and so forth.

This is justified by pointing to the biological capacity of women to bear children. Women's main role in society, the capitalists and their ideologists say, is reproduction, while men are the breadwinners, political leaders, and so forth.

What it comes down to is that women must limit their lives to taking care of their children and home, and not become involved in broader society. From an early age, there is a systematic attempt to convince women that they are weak and unintelligent, and therefore should be dependent on men.

There are, of course, physiological differences between men and women. But biology is *not* destiny, as women themselves are proving in the United States and other countries.

Since the rise of the women's movement at the end of the 1960s, thousands of women have entered many jobs they were traditionally excluded from. Women coal miners, truck drivers, steelworkers, and auto workers have given the lie to the claim that these are "men's jobs" only.

In Central America, Nicaraguan women played a key role in the struggle against the Somoza dictatorship. A number of women reached the rank of commander—the highest military rank among the insurgent forces—and played important military leadership roles. In El Salvador, we see a similar process.

Restriction of women's right to control their own bodies is one of the most fundamental and barbaric methods of ensuring that women "stay in their place."

Without the ability to determine whether and when to bear a child, a woman's entire life is circumscribed by her reproductive capacities. At any time, no matter what her economic circumstances or individual goals, she can be forced to carry a pregnancy to term. Once she gives birth, she will bear the major responsibility for bringing up the child.

Since other forms of contraception are not 100 percent effective, it's no wonder that millions of women choose to have an abortion at some time in their lives.

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OFFER GOOD UNTIL JULY 31

Read it and rebel—The federal Bureau of Indian Affairs says it’s probing problems in the 74 American Indian prisons they call deten-



tion centers. The Bureau reports that in the past three years at least 16 people have died in prison. The investigation has been under way

for only several weeks, so these are initial findings. They do say they’re looking into the case of a young girl who died in prison. According to *USA Today*, she died “while she was in custody at a facility attached to an Oregon boarding school.” (Emphasis added.)

A kid v. two cops—A police sergeant in South Tucson, Arizona, has been cleared of any criminal wrongdoing in handcuffing a nine-year-old girl and then subjecting her to a Taser stun gun. The story is that two cops were trying to prevent her from running away from a children’s residential psychiatric center. The

cops said that in the patrol car, after she was handcuffed, she screamed, kicked, and banged her head. Then she got the Taser treatment. The county attorney said the cops had good reason to fear for her safety as well as their own.

Just practicing—Sean Baker, of the Army Military Police, was assigned to the U.S. prison at Guantánamo in Cuba. There, Baker was selected for a “training drill.” He was put in a cell wearing a prisoner jump suit and was told to be uncooperative. Four MPs came in and before he knew it, they were beating and choking him. He suffered per-

manent brain damage and was given a medical discharge. His case was investigated. No misconduct was found. It is now being reopened.

Take the money and run—Lawrence Lasser, former investment chief at Putnam, may be leaving under a cloud but he will take \$78 million in severance pay. A spokesperson assured the deal won’t have “significant impact” on the company’s second-quarter income.

A fella with brass—Jeffery Barbakow has filed suit against WorldCom, once a telecommunications giant, but now bankrupt. Barbakow

charges he lost “tens of millions of dollars “ because he was duped into believing the company was doing fine and he should hold onto his shares. Barbakow was top dog at Tenet Healthcare, a targeted ripoff medical care chain. When things were about to hit the fan, he deftly cashed in \$111 million of his stock.

The sock-it-to-‘em system—General Mills is raising its prices from 2 percent to 9 percent. Items covered include processed food, dairy products, etc., and Progresso soup. The last time we looked, the soup was \$1.97 a can.

Mississippi: Black farmers meet to press fight for land

BY SAM MANUEL

LAUREL, Mississippi—An overflow crowd of about 500 people filled the Love of God Church here June 26 for a meeting sponsored by the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA), Inc.

It was the most recent in a series of gatherings to discuss efforts by farmers who are Black to fight for land and against decades-old racist discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

In meetings like this across the southeast, farmers have been asked to fill out a questionnaire aimed at establishing the ineffectiveness of a 1999 consent decree that settled a class action suit against the USDA by thousands of farmers.

In 1997 several suits by farmers for racist discrimination by the USDA were consolidated into the *Pigford v. Glickman* class action suit. Daniel Glickman was U.S. Secretary of Agriculture in the William Clinton administration. On April 14, 1999, a federal judge issued the consent decree. Farmers agreed to the settlement based on provisions for a tax-exempt \$50,000 payment to those who could provide minimal proof of discrimination, and for forgiveness of outstanding debts owed to the USDA. The consent decree also promised priority on fu-

ture loan requests to farmers who had been discriminated against in the past.

Washington’s failure to live up to the terms of the consent decree led BFAA, Inc., to file a motion with the court May 17 to amend or overturn the settlement. BFAA, Inc., president Thomas Burrell said the government had 30 days to respond, after which the judge could set a hearing date. “The purpose of the questionnaire is to show that, firstly, tens of thousands of people were never informed about the consent decree and therefore denied the possibility of taking advantage of it,” said Burrell. “It is five years since it was signed and only 13,000 farmers have gotten any money.”

Burrell also said that the consent decree left in their positions loan agents responsible for discrimination against farmers. “For that reason,” Burrell said, “we are fighting cases right now where the USDA is trying to foreclose on Black farmers.”

The battle by farmers who are Black that led up to this settlement was a pole of attraction for other exploited farmers fighting to defend their land and livelihoods against the rising cost of farm inputs like fertilizer, equipment, fuel, and seed, on the one hand, and the sinking price they get for their crops, on the other.



Militant/Sam Manuel

Participants in June 26 meeting of farmers in Laurel, Mississippi, fill out questionnaire to document government’s failure to implement 1999 consent decree.

Farmers at these meetings have described how the debt slavery facing all working farmers is compounded by the systematic anti-Black discrimination by the USDA, the banks, and other credit agencies.

Robert Garner, 62, of nearby Ellisville, for example, has a 40-acre farm on which he grows corn, cucumbers, okra, collard greens, and turnips. In 1977 he went to the local USDA office to apply for a loan and was denied it. He never received an explanation of why he was turned down, or what he needed to do in order to qualify. “They didn’t feel like they had to give you a reason or take any time with you,” he said. Garner said he heard about the consent decree, “but the same old people were still deciding on the loans and I didn’t see that they would change their minds about me.”

Burrell said more than 60,000 people received letters from the court-appointed arbitrator telling them they had filed too late to receive compensation for discrimination. During the question-and-answer period, Betty Porter said that she had filed on the day of the deadline but the application

was denied. “To this day they haven’t given me a reason,” she said.

William Chapman, 66, is a lifelong farmer who has 40 acres near Taylorsville, Mississippi, where he farms row crops including peas, cucumbers, and watermelon on land owned by his father. Chapman said he filed a claim under the consent decree and received the supposedly tax-free \$50,000 payment. But he is now paying out to the IRS, which says he owes taxes on the \$50,000. This was a common grievance by many farmers who were awarded the settlement.

Chapman farmed with two mules for many years. In 1979, he applied to the farm bureau for a loan for a tractor and got it. “It made a big difference when we’d go to harvest,” he said. “Then I got sick and couldn’t make a payment, and they came and took the tractor away.”

BFAA, Inc. is planning a similar meeting July 24 at the convention center in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

Susan LaMont from Birmingham, Alabama, contributed to this article.

SWP supporters on target to raise \$315,000 for revolutionary party

BY PAT O'REILLY

SEATTLE—Midway through 2004, supporters of the Socialist Workers Party “remain on course to collect the \$315,000 they have pledged to contribute to the party this year,” said Sara Gates, a member of the supporters’ financial steering committee. They have collected more than \$158,000 in the first half of this year, she said, \$400 above the target.

The SWP supporters adopted the current goal last year, after exceeding the \$300,000 target they had set for the period from August 2002 to July 2003.

Party supporters around the country collect regular monthly contributions, record them in an electronic database, and mail them to Seattle by the fifth of the month. Here, the steering committee—which has undertaken financial tasks previously carried out in the party center—verifies the checks received, prepares and makes the deposits, and sends the funds to the SWP national office in regular installments averaging \$26,250 per month. The committee also sends out a monthly newsletter to party supporters reporting on the status of the campaign.

Scott Breen, a member of the steering committee, described some of the advances supporters have made in this campaign in a presentation at the closing program of the June 10-12 SWP convention, which took place at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio.

“Since January 1,” Breen said, “27 new contributors joined the effort and a total of \$1,630 in new contributions has been raised.” As of the opening of the party convention, 349 contributors had pledges totaling \$26,687 per month—\$437 more than the monthly minimum needed to make the \$315,000 goal, and \$800 more than what the monthly pledges totaled on January 1.

On June 13, SWP supporters from 18 areas held a financial workshop at Oberlin College aimed at building on their successes and overcoming challenges such as

collecting back debts and ensuring timely payments. Supporters from areas that illustrated success in tackling these problems made presentations.

In San Francisco, supporters reduced large back debts by some contributors, meeting with them in person to work out the problem. In Washington, D.C., party supporters nearly doubled the number of contributors from eight last fall to 15 today by having regular discussions in the local monthly supporters’ meetings, and meeting individually with prospective contributors.

Several supporters groups have established local financial committees. In New York City, for example, the work of that committee has resulted in six new contributors and 10 raises from existing contributors so far this year—an additional \$720 per month.

At the workshop, Breen said that important strides in the timely collection and forwarding of pledges have been made. The back debt of individuals has gone down and the previous ups and downs of the monthly collection have tended to level out. The current monthly pledges exceeded the amount required to make the \$315,000 yearly goal, he said, but the margin was small. For this reason, the steering committee proposed raising the target to \$27,250 per month to help guarantee meeting the year’s goal.

SWP leader Dave Prince said at the workshop that the regular and stable income from supporters is an important part of the party’s budget. “The contributions help make possible the ongoing work of building the party and timely responsiveness to political developments,” he said. “They have facilitated carrying out price reductions in the party’s press that have helped SWP members increase the distribution of these essential publications.”

Those interested in becoming regular contributors to the SWP can contact the party supporters in the nearest area (see directory on page 8).

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



July 27, 1979

With the flight of dictator Anastasio Somoza to Miami July 17, the Nicaraguan workers and peasants have won a victory for working people throughout Latin America, in the United States, and around the world.

Like the Shah of Iran, the Somoza dynasty was placed in power by the U.S. government.

Like the shah, Somoza relied on a U.S.-armed and U.S.-trained military apparatus whose real mission was to terrorize and suppress all opposition.

Like Iran under the shah, Nicaragua under Somoza was an important base for imperialism’s counterrevolutionary operations in the region.

Like the shah, Somoza tried to drown in blood the aspirations of the masses for democratic rights and a better life.

But Somoza failed—as the shah’s monarchy, the Thieu regime in Vietnam, and the Batista dictatorship in Cuba failed before him.

Nicaragua shows once again the readiness of the world’s exploited masses to challenge the imperialist colossus, to sacrifice their lives for economic and social justice, for freedom from colonial domination.



July 26, 1954

Leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People urged Attorney General Brownell to make a thorough investigation of the racist violence at Trumbull Park Homes in Chicago and to prosecute those responsible for the terrorism.

NAACP Secretary Walter White and Washington Bureau director Clarence Mitchell took the matter up with Brownell July 14.

For almost a year now, Negroes who moved into the previously all-white federally owned project at Trumbull Park have been under attack from racist and fascist elements. Violence has flared and damage has been done to the government-owned property by hoodlums in the environs of the project. Although police are stationed at the project with the assignment of protecting the Negro families, no effective punitive action has been taken against the hoodlums, many of whom do not live in the project.

White told the attorney general that this situation is “only a part of a larger housing problem which has been aggravated by the policy of government agencies... which continue to give federal assistance to housing planned for the exclusive use of one race.”

Support union organizing

Support workers’ right to organize unions and to defend themselves from the bosses’ assaults!

Defend the labor movement from the continuing offensive by the employers and their twin parties of capitalism—the Democrats and Republicans!

These demands are at the center of the Socialist Workers Party campaign—in this year’s elections and beyond. They need to be championed by all working people.

The centrality of the fight to organize unions is underscored by the spreading resistance to the employers’ assaults by workers across the United States. Some of the strong points of this resistance today include Utah, the Upper Midwest, and South Florida.

Layers of militant workers in these areas and elsewhere are more and more rejecting the employers’ attempts to freeze pay, speed up production, and combine jobs; their callous disregard for job safety; and the lengthening of the workday, workweek, and work life, while millions are unemployed or working part-time.

As they begin to make breakthroughs or score victories in their battles to organize and consolidate unions to defend themselves—from the Co-Op coal mine in Utah to the Dakota Premium Foods meatpacking plant in South St. Paul, Minnesota, to the Point Blank Body Armor garment factory in Oakland Park, Florida—these workers will also help lead expanding union-organizing efforts that inspire others with the confidence that they can fight the bosses effectively and win.

In all such struggles, immediate action is focused on workers’ urgent material needs—increasing wages, improving job conditions, obtaining health care—and the defense of their democratic rights. To be effective, the fight must be attuned to the existing level of consciousness among the union membership or those organizing a union.

If significant forces are set into motion through this approach, several things can take place. Rank-and-file militancy can rise. Increasingly sharp clashes with the bosses can result, during which workers begin to shed illusions in class collaboration—the idea that they have common, rather than contending and irreconcilable, interests with their bosses and with the entire employers’

class—and acquire class-struggle concepts. Lessons thus learned during industrial conflicts can prepare the union ranks for an advance toward action on a political plane. In short, a foundation can be laid from which, over time, it will be possible to initiate the transformation of the trade unions themselves into instruments capable of developing far-reaching revolutionary perspectives.

If, during the course of their experiences in struggle, the labor militants are helped by other class-conscious workers to analyze the causes of the social and economic ills facing them, if they are aided in perceiving the essence of an outlived capitalism—they will learn that their existing problems are not incidental or episodic at all, but the consequence of a deep structural crisis of the system they live under. They will then see why governmental control must be taken away from the capitalists by labor and its allies on the land.

In “Trade Unions: Their Past, Present, and Future,” Karl Marx, one of the founders of scientific socialism, points out that the unions originally sprang up from the spontaneous attempts of working people to remove, or at least to minimize, the unavoidable competition among workers themselves imposed on them by the profit system.

If the unions, as the basic defensive organizations of the working class, are necessary for the recurring guerrilla fights between capital and labor, Marx says, they are still more important as organizing agencies for superseding the very system of wage slavery and capitalist rule.

Apart from their original purposes, the unions must learn to act deliberately as organizing centers of the working class in the broad interest of its complete liberation, Marx continues. They cannot fail to enlist the unorganized into their ranks. “They must look carefully after the interests of the worst-paid trades, such as the agricultural laborers, rendered powerless by exceptional circumstances. They must convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the downtrodden millions.”

The seeds of this future for the trade unions can be found in today’s militant working-class resistance.

Independent truckers end strike

Continued from front page

the port because of the work stoppage, costing the employers hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost revenue.

In issuing the order, U.S. District Judge Patricia Seitz claimed that the port and Universal Maritime Services, a private terminal operator at the docks, would suffer “immediate and irreparable injury, loss or damage” unless the strike was ended. The judge set a July 15 hearing to determine if her injunction barring the strike would be made permanent.

The beginning of the shutdown in Miami by more than 700 drivers coincided with a strike and job actions by truckers at Port Newark, New Jersey, and at the Port of New Orleans. Smaller protests by truckers at Port Everglades, Florida, and at other ports on the Gulf and Atlantic coasts also took place. The Miami strike continued for more than a week after the other job actions ended.

Truckers here who transport cargo to and from some of the major ports in the United States called their work stoppage over low wages, rising fuel costs, an insurance surcharge imposed on them by port authorities that is deducted from their paychecks, antiunion laws, and long unpaid waiting periods. The truckers are demanding a pay hike of \$50 per hour after a one-hour wait inside port premises, and an investigation into the skyrocketing rise in vehicle insurance they are being forced to pay. Currently truckers receive \$50 per trip to the port loading or unloading cargo. They often have to wait four hours because of the more stringent security measures the federal government and local authorities are imposing, and new security checks required by new federal “anti-terrorism” laws.

Trucker Omar Valtodano, originally from Nicaragua, described why he and his fellow drivers walked out. Prices of diesel fuel, tires, oil, oil filters, and other parts and supplies necessary for maintaining the trucks are rising, he said, while the amount the truckers are paid per trip has remained stagnant.

“We feel exploited and that is why we are here on strike,” said Marvin Alvarado. This driver said he had

worked for the port company Southern Ocean for more than eight years. “Eight years ago I was paid \$420 dollars for a trip from the Port of Miami to Orlando,” he said. “Today they pay \$380. Meanwhile, fuel prices keep going up.”

Diesel fuel for trucks has averaged \$1.75 cents per gallon recently across the country, an increase of 32 cents in the last 12 months and 65 cents higher than six years ago. In California, diesel fuel costs more than \$2 per gallon now.

Several truckers said the employers take cargo liability insurance out of their paychecks, and the wages they receive are too low to cover these escalating costs.

Luis Fernández, a 36-year-old trucker who is Cuban, told the *Militant* July 2 that “the bosses claim we will all go back to work on July 5, but here no one is going back to work.” Fernández said he left Cuba four years ago. “Here in Miami,” he added, “workers make very little money, and women make much less than men for the same job. It is not like this in Cuba.” The bad conditions and low pay forced them to go on strike, he said, and the drivers would continue the stoppage as long as necessary.

According to Channel 10 television here, the truckers also “want to be able to form unions and collectively bargain for better contracts from shipping and trucking companies that hire them out.” The trucking companies claimed the strike is unlawful because the drivers are allegedly breaking anti-trust laws. Truckers who are “owner-operators” are considered independent business people by the trucking companies and are “forbidden by federal price-fixing laws from negotiating and talking with employers together,” said Channel 10.

“The sad thing is that the trucking companies use us as employees, but don’t list us as employees,” Eduardo Vedayes, organizer of the Support Trucking Group that coordinated the strike, told the *Miami Herald* July 12. He added that the trucking companies had already advised customers at the port that they would be raising their rates by \$25 for each trip, but there was no guarantee that the drivers would get any raise. “The transportation companies are the ones who are going to benefit from this,” he said.

Truck drivers in South Florida organized a two-week strike four years ago around rising insurance and fuel costs. Their walkout coincided with efforts by the Teamsters union to organize independent truckers in South Florida, New Orleans, and Los Angeles at the time.

Stance on nuclear power is a political, not technical, matter

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

In his letter to the editor, Peter Anestos comments on an editorial in the July 6 issue and asks whether the *Militant* has changed its position on nuclear power.

The starting point here is not a technical, or scientific, question but a political question: how to advance the interests of workers, farmers, and the oppressed. This question must be approached in the framework of the world, not the United States.

As the editorial in the July 6 *Militant* noted, the fact that one-third of the world’s population lacks access to modern energy is a direct consequence of imperialist exploitation and domination. It will only be resolved by workers and farmers organizing a fight to take political power out of the hands of the exploiting classes. That struggle can be successful only if the workers movement forges an alliance with our fellow producers on the land, the farmers. To do so it must champion the demand to expand electrification throughout the world

REPLY TO A READER

as part of bridging the political and cultural gap between the urban and rural toilers. This means championing the efforts of nations oppressed by imperialism to develop their economic infrastructure and raise the living conditions and cultural level in face of systematic efforts by imperialism to perpetuate its domination and plunder of the semicolonial world.

It’s not enough to say that such problems will be resolved after a victorious socialist revolution—they are burning questions that must be taken up today by the workers movement.

In addressing the needs of the vast majority of humanity, the point is not which kinds of technology represent a “positive good” as opposed to a necessary evil, as Anestos poses it. All technology has its hazards. Again, this is a social question, not a “scientific” issue that somehow stands above classes and outside the class struggle. How safe or dangerous technology is, and how fast advances can be made to overcome seemingly unsolvable safety problems, depends on which class controls it.

Since the mid-1970s, the Socialist Workers Party has opposed the production and use of nuclear power in the United States. Class-conscious workers don’t trust big business, the capitalist government, and the bourgeois political parties to place human needs above profits in addressing the questions of health and safety posed by running nuclear power plants. That was the main point addressed in the 2001 *Militant* editorial that Anestos quoted.

Marxists don’t pretend to have the solution to the problem of the disposal of nuclear waste. But we don’t believe that safely harnessing the atom for productive purposes is impossible. Our starting point is not the half-life of uranium or other technical issues. We start from the demonstrated capacity of human beings to transform nature, raise the productivity of social labor, and advance the progress of civilization and culture.

It’s worth noting that in the two decades after the splitting of the atom, Socialist Workers Party leaders wrote—in *America’s Road to Socialism* by James P. Cannon, *Too Many Babies?* *The Myth of the Population Explosion* by Joseph Hansen, and *Understanding History* by George Novack—about the possibilities that could be opened for human progress by applying atomic energy if working people took their destiny into their own hands.

To those who want to make the issue one of the dangers of nuclear power, we must ask: what is their alternative to bring the majority of humanity out of darkness?

In contrast with middle-class reformers, we start not with the framework of the United States but with a world view of how to advance the interests of productive humanity. Two billion people—overwhelmingly in the semicolonial world—have no access of any kind to electricity or modern sources of fuel for cooking and heating. And the use of coal or oil—not to mention solar and wind power—is not the solution to meeting the long-term energy needs of humanity. Pollution from oil and coal-fired power takes a heavy toll on public health and the environment, especially in the semicolonial world where “scrubbers” and other costly “clean coal” technologies are more difficult to obtain.

While nuclear power accounts for 80 percent of electricity produced in France and 20 percent in the United States, the figure is merely 2 percent in South Asia, less than 1 percent in Latin America, and virtually zero in Africa and the Middle East. The labor movement should oppose attempts by Washington and its imperialist allies to maintain this virtual monopoly on nuclear energy, including their efforts to block Third World governments that already have nuclear plants from producing enriched uranium as nuclear fuel for electrical power generation.

It’s from this class and international standpoint that working people should defend the efforts of the power-poor semicolonial nations to obtain and develop the energy sources they need—including nuclear power—to lay the basis for closing the gap between city and countryside. Making this a central part of what the working-class vanguard fights for is necessary to be able to lead a successful struggle by workers and farmers for political power. A struggle that will change the course of history.

Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

By Leon Trotsky, Farrell Dobbs, and Karl Marx

Food for thought—and action—from revolutionary leaders of three different generations of the modern working-class movement. Invaluable to the practical education of militant workers who are relearning today what a strike is and how it can be fought and won. And who, in the course of such struggles, become interested in the ideas of fellow unionists fighting alongside them about how the entire system of capitalist exploitation can be ended. **\$15**

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High court: ‘enemy combatants’ to be tried

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Pentagon announced July 7 that it will hold “Combatant Status Review Tribunals” for all 595 men from 42 countries being held at Camp Delta, a high security prison on the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba—territory occupied by Washington against the will of the Cuban people.

The Pentagon’s action came in response to the June 28 rulings by the U.S. Supreme Court, which decided, in three cases, that U.S. citizens ordered detained by the president as “enemy combatants” must be given their day in court.

The court also ruled that all of the alleged members of al-Qaeda and the Taliban being held at the Guantánamo prison camp have the right to use U.S. courts to challenge charges against them. Most of the prisoners have been held for two years or more without charges and have been denied access to attorneys or visits by relatives.

Under the order for the hearings, signed by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, each of the detainees will be informed that the newly set-up military tribunal will review their status and that they have a right to a separate hearing in federal court.

In the Pentagon review, defendants would be allowed to present testimony, evidence, and call “readily available” witnesses. However, they would not have an attorney—only

a military officer acting as a “personal representative.” The tribunal review would be conducted by three commissioned military officers.

With its rulings, the Supreme Court told the ruling class that the executive branch of the government is going too far in undermining democratic rights under the banner of the “war on terrorism.”

“Executive Branch Reined In,” read the headline of a *Washington Post* story on the court decision. The article noted that the measures taken by the government immediately after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon have become increasingly difficult to justify nearly three years later. “The justices suggested several times in their opinions,” wrote the *Post*, “emergency measures that might have been within the president’s power in the days and weeks just after 9/11 now must be reconciled with American norms of due process.”

“We have long since made clear that a state of war is not a blank check for the President when it comes to the rights of the nation’s citizens,” wrote Justice Sandra Day O’Connor.

On Nov. 10, 2003, the court decided over the objection of the administration to hear two appeals on behalf of 16 of those detained at the Guantánamo prison camp. And last December a federal court in New York ruled that the so-called enemy combat-



Military police move Guantánamo prisoner after interrogating him Feb. 6, 2002.

ants could not be held indefinitely without charges or a trial in which they have the chance to defend themselves.

The Bush administration has argued that since the prisoners are detained outside U.S. territory they are not entitled to access to U.S. courts nor to protections afforded prisoners of war.

At the center of the cases was that of Yaser Esam Hamdi, a U.S. citizen who was captured on the battlefield in Afghanistan during the U.S.-led war to overthrow the Taliban regime. Justices Antonin Scalia and John Paul Stevens wrote that the U.S. constitution forbids the president from doing anything but charging Hamdi with a crime such as treason or releasing him, unless Congress specifically authorizes executive detention.

The court also ruled that Hamdi must be granted a hearing but did not specify how such a hearing would take place. In a concession to the administration, the court agreed that the usual presumption of innocence in Hamdi’s case could be suspended, admission of hearsay evidence could be accepted, and the court indicated that a military tribunal could suffice for Hamdi’s day in court.

The court returned the case of Abdullah al-Muhajir, also known as José Padilla, to the lower courts on jurisdictional grounds. It said that the New York court to which his attorney appealed for an order for his release did not have the authority to rule. Padilla’s attorney will now have to resubmit his appeal to a federal court in South Carolina.

Padilla, a U.S. citizen, was arrested in May 2002 upon his return to the United States from Pakistan. He is charged with having met with leaders of al-Qaeda and with planning to explode a radiological bomb in a U.S. city. Following his arrest, Padilla was taken to New York as a material witness in the September 11 attacks. Two days before a judge was to hear a challenge to his detention, the Bush administration declared him an “enemy combatant” and transferred him to a Navy brig in South

Carolina.

Attorneys representing those held at Camp Delta and their families said they will quickly seek review of the detentions. Until now the few that have been allowed have met with their clients only at the discretion of the Pentagon and their discussions were videotaped.

The court’s ruling did not affect the legality of military tribunals at Camp Delta or those being detained by the CIA at undisclosed locations.

The day following the high court’s decision, the Pentagon announced the appointment of a five-member military tribunal to try three of those detained at Guantánamo. They are David Hicks of Australia, Ali al-Bahlul of Yemen, and Ibrahim al-Qosi of Sudan. On July 7, the Pentagon announced that nine other unnamed individuals are eligible to be tried by the tribunal. One military lawyer assigned as a defense attorney has filed a petition in federal court seeking to halt the trials on the grounds that they violate U.S. and international laws.

Youth festival

Continued from Page 2

involved in defending the government of Venezuela. Building the 2005 festival is a major part of defending Venezuela and the Cuban Revolution, she said. She also told delegates that the number of doctors and other Cuban volunteers in Venezuela had increased to 16,000.

Delegates described struggles they are involved in for jobs, union organizing, women’s rights, national liberation, and against the U.S.-led occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The previous two world youth festivals took place in Algeria in 2001 and in Cuba in 1997 and were attended by 6,000 and 12,000 youth, respectively, from dozens of countries.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

ALABAMA

Birmingham

Jew-hatred and Conspiracy Theories: A Working-class Response Speaker: Janine Dukes, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate. Sun., July 18, 4:00 p.m. 3029A Bessemer Road. Tel: (205) 780-0021.

NEW YORK

New York

The Crisis Facing Working Farmers and the Hike in Milk Prices Speaker: Willie Cotton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress, 15th CD. Fri., July 23. Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. 307 W 36th St., 10th Floor (use north elevators)

UTAH

Price

Lessons of the Cuban Revolution—1959 to Today Speakers: Alma Acevedo, member of the Bolivarian Circle, and a representative of the Socialist Workers Party. Fri., July 23. dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. **Two Billion People in the World Have No Electricity—Support the Right of Semicolonial Countries to Expand Electrification** Speaker: Olivia Nelson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., July 30, 7:30 p.m. 11 West Main St. room 103. Suggested donation: \$5 Tel. (435) 613-1091.

UNITED KINGDOM

Edinburgh

Celebrate the opening of Pathfinder Books and the Militant Labor Forum hall in Edinburgh—Defend Venezuela’s sovereignty, Defend the Cuban Revolution Speaker: Tony Hunt, Communist League. Sat., July 24. Meal, 6:00 p.m.; program, 7:00 p.m. 3 Grosvenor St.

—CALENDAR—

NEW YORK

New York

Meet the Socialist Workers Party Candidates, Campaign Rally Sat., July 17. Reception and dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. 307 W 36th St., 10th Floor (use north elevators). Suggested donation: \$5 for dinner, \$5 for program. Tel: (212) 736-2540.

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte

Benefit for Pillowtex Workers Thu., July 29, 7:00 p.m. Levine Museum of the New South 200 E. 7th St. Suggested donation: \$10. Tel. (704) 333-1887 ext. 224.

—LETTERS—

Electrification, nuclear power

In its recent editorial, the *Militant* correctly condemns the campaign by the United States and other industrial powers to prevent Third World nations from developing nuclear power as a source of energy. Oppressed peoples are everywhere entitled to every resource available to them in the struggle against their exploitation and domination by imperialism.

However, in advancing nuclear power over oil and gas as a more productive, less wasteful, and less polluting source of energy, the editorial signals a shift by the *Militant* from its previous position on the question of nuclear energy itself. For example, I note in its Feb. 12, 2001, editorial, under the title “No to nuclear power,” the paper argued, “nuclear power is not a straightforward alternative to oil, coal, and other methods of power generation. It is inherently dangerous.” Recent advances in nuclear production technology which have greatly reduced radiation and pollution dangers, while

acknowledged in the editorial, did not sway it from this unqualified rejection.

If the *Militant* now argues for nuclear power as a positive good in the struggle to raise humanity out of darkness, rather than purely a weapon of defense imposed by necessity (in regard to Cuba’s construction of its nuclear power plant, for example), what caused it to change its mind?

Peter Anestos
San Francisco, California

1965 Dominican revolt

I recently got a copy of the book, *The Dominican Crisis: The 1965 Constitutionalist Revolt and American Intervention*. The author is Piero Gleijeses. The *Militant* recently ran a number of excerpts from his book, *Conflicting Missions*.

The Dominican Crisis was originally published in French in 1973. Then an expanded version was published in English in 1978. Similar to his other work, Gleijeses interviews a large number of the actors in the events from

the assassination of the dictator Trujillo in 1961; the election of the bourgeois nationalist Juan Bosch to the presidency in 1963; his overthrow nine months later; the 1965 constitutionalist revolt centered within the military; the desertion (sometimes temporary) of all leadership as masses of rank-and-file soldiers, workers and peasants fought in the streets of Santo Domingo; Francisco Caamaño’s conversion from reluctant constitutionalist to anti-imperialist fighter, inspired by those same masses; and U.S. military intervention against the “infelices,” as the toilers were called.

He gives a detailed accounting of all the political parties at each stage and quotes extensively from U.S. embassy communications with top government officials in Washington during the crisis.

With Washington’s current campaign against the Chávez government in Venezuela and the upcoming fortieth anniversary of the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic, *The Dominican*

Crisis contains a lot of important lessons. The book is out of print, but well worth the search for used copies.

Candace Wagner
Bronx, New York

Small farmers in Canada

The June 19 edition of the Montreal daily *Le Devoir* reported on a special convention of the Union des producteurs agricoles, the main organization of farmers, both large and small, in Québec. It gave a glimpse of the plight facing farmers.

In 1992 Québec farms declared Can\$80 of debt for every \$100 of revenue; in 2002, it was \$142 of debt for the same \$100 of revenue.

The farmers are squeezed between the corporations that charge them high prices for their supplies and those, sometimes the same capitalists, that pay farmers low prices for their produce.

Last January, it cost 73 cents to produce a liter of milk that sold for 60 cents. It cost \$4.13 to produce a kilo of beef that the

farmer sold for only \$2.89. Le Devoir noted a common expression among farmers: “We produce at the retail price and sell at the wholesale price.” Companies like Better Beef and Cargill have reaped huge profits from the U.S. “mad-cow” embargo on Canadian beef. Taking advantage of the glutted Canadian market these corporations “dramatically lowered” the prices paid to farmers for cattle while the price of beef in stores remained as high as ever.

Across Canada, the approximately 250,000 farms had a total negative revenue of 312 million dollars.

Al Cappe
Montreal, Quebec

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Behind the steep rise in milk prices

Capitalist dairies and distributors profit; small farmers and workers lose

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

NEW YORK—"Fifteen years ago there were more than 1,000 dairy farmers in Washington County," said Jo Bates. "There are not 200 left now."

Bates, 67, spoke to *Militant* reporters June 27 on the dairy farm in Washington County, northeastern New York, that she and her family have operated since 1967. For many years, she has campaigned with others to pressure the government and milk processing giants to pay prices for raw milk that would provide farmers with a living income.

Bates and other farmers emphasized that the recent hike in the price of milk on supermarket shelves does not translate into a bonanza for small producers on the land. It only benefits capitalist dairies and distributors, they said, while exploited farmers and workers continue to get the shaft.

"Efficiency isn't the answer" to the sword of foreclosure that hangs over many farmers, Bates said. "We're as efficient as you can get."

Decline in numbers of dairy farms

The steep drop in farms in Washington County is part of a national picture of declining numbers of working dairy farmers.

The *National News*, a newspaper in rural New York, reported June 1 that nationwide "the number of dairy farms has dropped by 17.8 percent between 2000 and 2003." There are now 6,000 dairy farms in New York, it reported—16 percent fewer than in 2000.

The National Farmers Organization (NFO) reported in April 2002 that the number of U.S. dairy farms had fallen from 190,000 to 70,000 over the previous four decades. "The average output in 1960 was 648 pounds of milk per day for each dairy," stated the report. "Today it is 4,978 pounds. But getting bigger has not helped those 70,000 remaining, who struggle daily with precipitously low market prices."

To farmers caught in the squeeze between low returns from selling their products and rising input and equipment costs, the recent increase in payouts for raw milk have come as a relief.

"Most farmers are behind" following years of bad prices, Randy Jasper said in a June 24 phone interview. Jasper and his son operate a herd of 140 Holstein cows—the most common variety in the U.S. dairy industry—on their farm in Muscoda, near Wisconsin's eastern border.

The average payout received by farmers for 100 pounds of milk was \$20 in June. "That's a good price," Jasper said in the phone interview. Prices paid to farmers are usually listed by the hundredweight (cwt), which equals 11.6 gallons of milk.

"For a long time the price was \$10 a cwt," said Jasper. "Break-even for me is between \$13 and \$14.50."

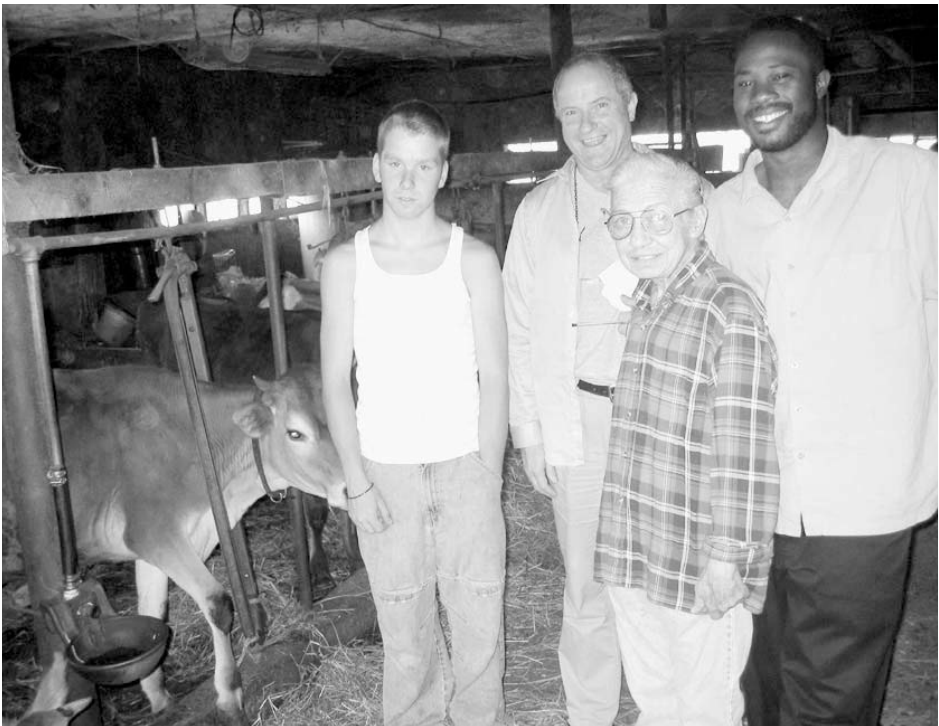
Figures from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange for prices of Class III, or whole fat, milk, the kind produced by most farms, bear Jasper out.

The exchange is a futures market where the prices of cheese and butter are set. These figures are used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to establish the monthly payout to farmers—a figure then modified by Milk Marketing Boards in each state.

According to CME reports, the payout stood at \$20.58 in May. Earlier this year and for the past several years, however, prices were much lower. In January farmers received \$11.61, in February \$11.89, and in March \$14.49.

In recent years, whole milk mostly fetched around \$10 or less a cwt, or 10 cents a pound. In its June 30, 2000, report, the CME noted that regarding prices paid to farmers "for the first half of the year, the Class III averaged just \$9.56, the lowest half since 1978."

In the year 2000 hard-pressed farmers in Wisconsin, California, Illinois, and elsewhere took part in a coordinated national milk dump to dramatize their demand that



Militant/Dan Fein

Bates dairy farm in northeastern New York, June 27. From left: Brian Bates, 13; *Militant* reporter Patrick O'Neill; Jo Bates, a farmer for decades; and Willie Cotton, meat packer and Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress in New York's 15th C.D.

the federal government guarantee a base price of \$14.50 a cwt.

Working people pay more

In the last few months the money forked out by consumers—most of them working people—for milk and milk products has risen sharply. Over the year to May, for example, the recommended price of whole milk in metropolitan New York climbed 71 percent, to \$4.18 a gallon. Another 25 cents was added in June.

"The stores increased the prices before the farmers ever got any raise," said Vermont dairy farmer Dexter Randall in a June 26 interview. Farmers are paid one month after delivering their milk, and don't know the price they will receive until then, he explained.

According to the May 22 *Boston Globe*, Christopher Galen, an official of the National Milk Producers Federation, said that supermarkets "often raise their prices immediately when the price farmers received for their milk goes up, but are much slower to lower them when the farm price falls." The April 10 *Hartford Advocate* noted that Connecticut attorney general Richard Blumenthal had instituted an investigation

into alleged price gouging by dairy companies—"i.e. conspiring to keep the cost of milk high in the grocery store, even as the price paid to dairy farmers sank."

Blumenthal said that in January 2003 "milk consumers are paying vastly more. Yet dairy farmers are receiving significantly less. Retailers and processors are reaping the windfall."

Decrease in dairy production

The farmers who spoke to the *Militant* agreed that their returns have improved the last two months, however belatedly, registering the relative shortage of dairy products over the past several years.

Among the factors behind this shortage, reported the *Journal News*, was the "rising demand for beef," which has created "an incentive to slaughter dairy cattle."

The New York paper also noted that the ban on import of cattle from Canada—a protectionist measure by the U.S. government under the rationalization of the possible spread of "mad cow" disease—means that "dairy farmers who normally buy 60,000 young cows annually from their neighbor to the north have been unable to secure cattle to boost their herds."

U.S. gov't slaps tariffs on shrimp from China, Vietnam

BY DOUG NELSON

The U.S. Department of Commerce imposed tariffs on imports of shrimp from China and Vietnam on July 6. The protectionist measures amount to 112 percent duties on shrimp from China and 93 percent from Vietnam. The Commerce Department has accused the two governments of "dumping" shrimp in the United States—that is, selling at artificially low prices to capture market share.

As part of encouraging denationalization of industry in China and Vietnam, the U.S. government ruling includes separate duty rates for companies that "have demonstrated an absence of government control." Many of these companies will face substantially lower or no tariffs.

The decision was prompted by a petition filed by the Shrimp Trade Action Committee. This business group includes members of the Southern Shrimp Alliance, an association of companies related to the shrimp industry in eight southern coastal states. These capitalists requested that tariffs be levied on the six largest exporters of shrimp into the United States: Brazil, China, Ecuador, India, Thailand, and Vietnam. The Commerce Department has not yet made a decision on the other four countries.

Exporters from these countries have successfully captured a greater share of the U.S. shrimp market in the last few years. The petition cited statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau stating that import volumes from these six countries rose by about 70 percent between 2000 and 2002, while import prices declined about 28 percent. The U.S. shrimp fishing companies claim this has caused a decline in the domestic price by 45 percent. At the same time, consumer prices for shrimp have risen during the same period, which has meant higher profits for U.S. distributors.

Vietnam's seafood industry condemned the accusations last February when the U.S. international trade commission first ruled that Hanoi and other governments were "dumping" shrimp into the United States. Fish farming is the second largest export industry in Vietnam. The United States accounts for almost half of Vietnam's shrimp export market. Last year, Washington imposed tariffs on imports of catfish from Vietnam.

Beijing has been a major target of "antidumping" tariffs by the U.S. government, which imposed similar duties on a number of products manufactured in China this year. At the same time, Washington con-

The Canadian cattle are normally a large component of the 90,000 to 180,000 cows needed to renew the U.S. dairy herd in the United States, Larry Salathe, an economist with the USDA, told the *Journal News*. The herd declined by 100,000 head to 9 million last year. Salathe also said that many of the remaining cows are producing less because of a drop in supply of a hormone used to spur milk production.

"Nationally milk production dropped 2 percent in the first quarter compared with a year ago," wrote Jeanne Naujeck in the *Tennessean*. "As of January 1 there were 77,000 milk cows in Tennessee, down 8 percent from the previous year's count. Ten years ago there were nearly twice that many," she wrote.

The journalist quoted Tommy and Wendy Lamb, dairy farmers in Arrington, Tennessee, who "have stayed afloat by working extra jobs to pay debts.... Wendy Lamb said no farmer will see the whole \$18"—the official state price in May.

"Prices are paid based on amount of butterfat," Lamb said, "and there's an adjustment for location, as well as costs for hauling and advertising dues—those deductions could skim off several dollars."

Naujeck noted that "staying afloat has been tough as farmers buy feed, fertilizer, fuel, land and equipment priced for 2004—with proceeds from milk prices stuck in the 1970s."

Rising costs for farmers

The increases in the prices charged by the big oil companies and the natural gas suppliers have both direct and indirect impacts on farmers. Fertilizers are based on nitrogen, which is produced using natural gas, while many pesticides have petroleum derivatives as their foundation. The gas price rise has affected the prices of all such commodities.

In addition, farmers noted that steel has doubled in price, affecting the parts they buy and the cost of repairs to equipment.

Above everything else, the farmers who spoke to the *Militant* said, they wanted to keep farming. At the same time, they said, a living and stable income for producers on the land should not be at the expense of those who buy their products.

Speaking to the *Tennessean*, farmer Rabon Bayless said the ups and downs of milk's shelf price are "not good for farmers or consumers. We'd all be better off if prices would stabilize where farmers could make a living and consumers could pay a decent price for milk."

tinues to negotiate trade deals with Beijing as it seeks to take maximum share of the Chinese market to sell U.S.-made goods.

Meanwhile, the governments in most countries in the European Union, Japan, and the United States continue to spend hundreds of billions of dollars each year on agricultural subsidies for capitalist farmers, allowing them to often sell farm products below the cost of production to drive out of business producers in the semicolonial world.

Through these unequal terms of trade, imposed through the imperialist domination of finance capital, Washington increased its agricultural export/import ratio with semicolonial countries by 198 percent between 1997 and 2002, according to the International Food Policy Institute, a group funded by the World Bank. The same group estimates that these subsidies cost semicolonial countries about \$24 billion a year in lost exports.

As a result, millions of farmers in the oppressed nations lose money on crops grown for the domestic market and are driven out of business and off the land. Through this process, Washington and its imperialist allies strengthen their domination of the Third World and accelerate the long-term social crisis in these countries.